Celebrating 10 years of storytelling

Every day, BirdNote brings moments of joy, learning, and inspiration to listeners around the world — while building widespread awareness of birds and conservation. Thank you for investing in the future of the natural world by supporting BirdNote. This annual report is a celebration of the difference that you — our donors, volunteers, advisors, and advocates — make for birds by supporting BirdNote’s voice for conservation.

A powerful voice for birds . . . inspiring a growing audience

BirdNote is broadcast on more than 200 radio stations in the US, Canada, and the Philippines, reaching an estimated 1.7 million people annually. We’re also connecting with listeners on multiple digital platforms, including podcasts, videos, photography, and blog stories distributed through our website and social media. Visits to our website increased 45% last year, totaling 1.13 million page views; 67.8% of those visitors were new. On BirdNote’s Facebook page, total fans grew by 42%, with a total of 3.9 million impressions in 2015. BirdNote partners, including the National Audubon Society and American Bird Conservancy, share selected BirdNote stories with their members. Together, we are educating more people about the beauty, mystery, and critical importance of birds — and building a larger and more inclusive constituency for conservation.

BirdNote’s impact

BirdNote occupies a unique and influential niche in the conservation movement. We advocate for birds and the environment on a broad, national platform. We complement and advance the missions of environmental non-profits across the country. We bridge the gap between individuals who have differing viewpoints on the environment and open a door to conservation for many listeners who have not yet engaged with environmental issues. And our programs serve as a catalyst for action. In a recent survey, listeners told us that as a result of listening to BirdNote, they are more likely to advocate for protection of bird and wildlife habitats, support bird-related and environmental non-profits, incorporate native plants in their gardens, and be mindful consumers.

What’s next . . .

In the pages that follow, we share some of the programming highlights of 2015 — bold new stories we’ve undertaken to expand our reach and improve our engagement with listeners as well as some of the directions new formats will take us. Both offer an exciting taste of what’s to come. We’re also very proud to share a summary of our strategic plan — completed in 2015 — which offers a clear vision for doubling and diversifying our listenership to grow the audience for conservation.

One of our listeners, Denise Acsay, tells us her favorite bird songs are in spring because the sounds seem to represent “. . . the physical manifestation of the way one feels in the spring. New life. Hope. Promise. Ah, it has so much.” Hope. Promise. That’s how we feel about BirdNote and our plans for the future. There is hope for birds and the natural world when we work together. Thank you for helping BirdNote fulfill the promise of our powerful mission: to inspire listeners to care about the natural world — and take steps to protect it.

Thomas Luhman, Board President

Sallie Bodie, Managing Director
BirdNote Strategic Plan, 2015 – 2018

Since the first BirdNote show aired in 2005, BirdNote has become a powerful catalyst for conservation, reaching an estimated 1.7 million listeners daily. But for conservation to succeed, we must introduce the wonders of nature to the widest possible audience. The rapidly changing demographics of our country — coupled with the dynamic media landscape — present BirdNote with a compelling opportunity to further advance conservation for birds and improve the health of the natural environment. BirdNote’s three-year strategic plan provides the blueprint for the evolution we need in order to broaden our reach, amplify our impact, and build organizational strength, resilience, and flexibility. The following objectives are guiding our work through 2018:

Double BirdNote’s Audience
• Develop channels for national and major market distribution
• Explore digital strategies in support of this objective

Reach Diverse Audiences
• Develop partnerships to engage priority audiences
• Identify platforms and content that reach new and diverse audiences
• Invite multiple voices to create content that captures various perspectives

Expand Digital Capacity
• Increase digital production, distribution, and marketing
• Enhance staffing and technology to ensure digital success

Build a Strong Base of Sustaining Support for BirdNote
• Expand base of donors nationwide
• Build major individual giving program
• Diversify sources of revenue to include more foundation and corporate partnerships

Develop Board and Governance Capacity
• Recruit and add new board members who have representative skills and perspectives
• Prepare directors for board roles, fundraising, and leadership
• Engage ad hoc working committees that can include non-board members to address short-term organizational needs

Nurture a Healthy Working Environment and Effective Organization
• Create a stable business and financial operation that has appropriate working capital and assess annual effectiveness
• Plan and budget for a professional annual audit
• Maintain a high-caliber and happy staff that meets the needs of the organization
## BirdNote Growth Milestones, 2005 – 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Station carriage*</th>
<th>Annual listeners**</th>
<th>Annual revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2012</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>170</td>
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<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>1,700,000</td>
<td>$500,491</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* KPLU 88.5 FM aired BirdNote for the first time on February 21, 2005.

** Includes broadcast audience, online audience (including social media), and podcast audience.
BirdNote’s strategic plan calls for doubling and diversifying the BirdNote audience by 2019 by reaching new markets, developing programming in new formats, and distributing content on new platforms. This expansion in production demands a corresponding investment in our staffing and organizational capacity, and in 2015, we launched the BirdNote Soars campaign to support this investment. Our goal is to raise $1.15 million — in addition to our annual operating income — over a three-year period.

BirdNote Soars will support the addition of the following key staff:

- Multimedia Producer
- Digital Manager
- Project Producer
- Development and Administrative Associate
- Chief Financial Officer

and the hiring of contract specialists in the areas of social media, program assessment and evaluation, web design, and communications.

The campaign has also helped BirdNote establish a working cash reserve to insulate operations against normal income fluctuations.

As of June 2016, the BirdNote Soars campaign has reached 62% of its goal. Our sincere thanks to the generous donors who have made stretch gifts to the campaign in addition to their annual support. To join them in helping BirdNote soar, please contact Kate Godman at (206) 495-9640 or kateg@birdnote.org.

Test Flights

In 2015, we tested new ways of telling stories to reach new audiences — people who were not already tuned in to BirdNote. These tests included two short videos featuring Dr. J. Drew Lanham, BirdNote board member and Clemson University professor. Rules for the Black Birdwatcher, a thought-provoking story about the unique challenges of birdwatching as an African American, based on Professor Lanham’s writings, was a runaway hit.

Rules for the Black Birdwatcher reached more than 160,000 Facebook users in just a few weeks, prompting lively conversation about diversity, conservation, and access. It’s a great example of the kind of work we plan to produce — with the support of BirdNote Soars — to broaden the audience for our stories on behalf of birds and conservation.

Here’s what some of our Facebook fans said about Rules for the Black Birdwatcher:

“I hadn’t considered this perspective.” — Jody P.

“Funny, informative, and poignant. Nice video.” — Kris V.

“I never, ever thought of this. My white privilege is showing.” — Cherie F.

“From one blackbirder to another, thank you for posting this. If nothing else, it will keep the issue(s) on the conscious side.” — Clayton A.
What Makes BirdNote Sing?

What does it take to produce and distribute BirdNote stories? Here’s how BirdNote puts your generous contributions to work — inspiring people to notice, to care about, and to protect birds and their habitats.

By Ginger Oppenheimer, BirdNote Volunteer

Production

1. A new BirdNote show starts with creative ideas — from staff, advisors, partners, volunteers, and listeners. Sources of inspiration include the seasonal behaviors of birds, the latest research and conservation news, partner initiatives, spin-off concepts from episodes in the works, species profiles, and personal observations. Stories are selected and assigned to BirdNote’s corps of writers, which now includes Bob Sundstrom, PhD, lead writer; as well as Ellen Blackstone; Gordon Orians, PhD; Dennis Paulson, PhD; Todd Peterson; and Rick Wright.

2. Writers translate ideas into inspiring stories — based on sound science. Writers create and refine their stories with direction from the production team, then a BirdNote science advisor — Dennis Paulson, Gordon Orians, or Bob Sundstrom — reviews each script to ensure factual accuracy. When the scripts have been proofread, they are ready for recording. Fascinating fact: Bob Sundstrom has written more than 500 of the 1,300 episodes produced since BirdNote was first broadcast in 2005.

3. Narrators give the stories a human voice. On recording day, Mary McCann and Michael Stein narrate the stories (new stories as well as archived stories that need to be updated for rebroadcast; see #4, below). From the sound booth, members of the production team, including producer John Kessler and production project manager Ellen Blackstone, listen to every take and suggest tweaks or changes to the wording or the emphasis of a particular word or phrase. At times, the outtakes are humorous (have you ever tried to pronounce Southern Cassowary?).

4. Archived shows are prepared for rebroadcast. Because BirdNote airs every day, the monthly schedule includes episodes that aired previously, typically two or more years ago. Ellen ensures that a variety of shows are scheduled during the month without repeating subjects. Archived shows are reviewed, scripts are updated to ensure scientific accuracy, and the narrators revoice shows that have updated scripts.

5. Everything comes together during mixing. John mixes the bird songs, ambient sounds, music, narration, sound bites, and theme music to create the inspiring, high-quality BirdNote shows that you enjoy every day. This is a job of subtlety and delicacy; John reviews everything in painstaking detail. Then, members of the production team listen to the newly recorded episodes, and they work together to identify areas that need refinement. Typically, about half are ready to air; the other half go back to John for minor fixes (these might include striking an entire line or editing out a narrator taking a breath).

Did you know? Most of the bird sounds featured in BirdNote shows are provided by the Macaulay Library of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
Distribution

When production is complete, the BirdNote team prepares the shows for distribution on the air, online, and via podcast.

**Radio stations:** BirdNote is broadcast on more than 200 radio stations in North America. Selected episodes are also available via Public Radio Exchange and embedded in *Living on Earth*, which is distributed by Public Radio International and broadcast by 250 stations weekly.

**Niche program services:** BirdNote is distributed to radio reading services for the blind, Native American–operated stations, emerging stations broadcasting on the internet, and many others.

**Email:** The BirdNote Weekly Preview email offers subscribers advance notice of shows scheduled for radio broadcast during the coming week.

**Online:** BirdNote shows (as well as carefully curated photographs, videos, and blogs) are available any time at www.birdnote.org.

**Social media:** Photos and links to daily shows appear on Facebook and Twitter. A selection of shows is posted to SoundCloud and selected sound bites to Clammr. Pinterest features several BirdNote boards.

**Podcast:** BirdNote is available as a podcast through iTunes.

**Partners:** BirdNote partners, including National Audubon Society and Forterra, share BirdNote through their websites, blogs, and social media.

Feedback

“I am not an expert birder, but I like to learn new things about birds, and the pictures are spectacularly beautiful. BirdNote makes it worth logging into Facebook!” — Ellen B., New York

“I’ve only recently become aware of BirdNote, but now I listen every chance I get on the radio and the web. It often provides information I didn’t know about a bird, and it always elevates my mood.” — Carmen C., Missouri

“I learn so much in the little sound bites and love the pictures that are part of the Weekly Preview email. I have become an avid birder, in part because of BirdNote.” — Dana K., Washington

“I enjoy both the radio spot and the Facebook page. I love the beautiful photos and intriguing insight on all my feathered friends! I look forward to it every day.” — Leah J., Washington

Send your show ideas and feedback to info@birdnote.org.
Thank you for partnering with BirdNote to bring the wonder and joy of birds to listeners around the world. Your gifts help BirdNote produce inspiring stories — and distribute them through radio stations and an increasing number of digital distribution channels.

OPERATING REVENUE $500,491

- Individual Contributions $382,683 (76%)
- Foundation Grants $60,000 (12%)
- In-Kind Support $28,200 (6%)
- Corporate Giving $16,981 (3%)
- Sales and Other Income* $12,627 (3%)

* Includes cost of goods sold

OPERATING EXPENSES $417,299

- Telling the Stories $248,256 (59%)
- Outreach to Stations and Listeners $41,884 (10%)
- In-Kind Expenses $28,200 (7%)
- Managing and Building the Organization $98,959 (24%)
- In-Kind Support $28,200 (6%)
BirdNote Travelers Awed by South America

By Adam Sedgley, Board Member and Trip Leader

Twenty-six adventurous travelers joined BirdNote in November 2015 to experience the beauty and diversity of South America’s birds and varying cultures. We started in Santiago, Chile, where we enjoyed churches, markets, and the eccentric home of Pablo Neruda. Day trips included wine tasting in the Maipo Valley and exploring the coastal city of Valparaiso. From Santiago, we flew to Punta Arenas, the southernmost continental city in the world. We spent one afternoon at European colonial museums and the next at a breeding colony of Magellanic Penguins. We then drove north toward the heart of Patagonia and the Torres del Paine National Park, where we enjoyed viewing Chilean Flamingos, Andean Condors, Lesser Rheas, and breathtaking mountain views. On the Argentinian side, we observed endemic Magellanic Woodpeckers against the backdrop of the world-renowned Perito Moreno glacier.

Buenos Aires offered avenues lined with centuries-old buildings and an urban wetland that has 49 species of birds. A trip extension to the stunning Iguazu Falls on the borders of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, awed trip participants. Swirls of Great Dusky Swifts, vibrantly colored Plush-crested Jays and Toco Toucans could hardly distract us from this two-mile high marvel.

After 14 days, our enthusiastic group had visited three countries, shared delicious meals, witnessed some of the most beautiful places on Earth, and tallied 143 bird species (187 for those who took the trip to Iguazu Falls). That’s travel, BirdNote style! Please consider joining us on a future trip. For more information, contact Kate Godman at (206) 495-9640 or kateg@birdnote.org.

“We continue to enjoy remembering the trip and how much each of you made our experience deeply memorable and satisfying. Happy Trails!

— Beth and Marc

Join us on our next adventure

A portion of travel fees support BirdNote programs. Thank you!

PANAMA
September 13 – 25, 2016

AMAZON RIVER CRUISE
January 12 – 22, 2017

CUBA
April 18 – 29, 2017

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK
August 20 – 28, 2017

Future trips include destinations such as South Africa, Belize, Europe, and many more.
The Boreal Songbird Initiative and BirdNote Promote Conservation

Nearly half of all the bird species in the US and Canada depend on one amazing resource: the boreal forest of North America. It stretches from the interior of Alaska across northern Canada, providing critical habitat for up to three billion nesting birds. But the forest is under pressure. Many boreal bird populations are declining — while development and resource extraction are intensifying.

Fortunately, there’s still time to make a difference. Conservation science contends that at least 50% of an ecosystem should be protected to preserve its health and biodiversity. BirdNote is pleased to partner with the Boreal Songbird Initiative to raise awareness of the importance of the boreal forest — and promote the Boreal Birds Need Half campaign. Protecting at least 50% of the boreal forest will give wildlife the best chance at survival while allowing for local and regional prosperity in the form of natural resource extraction. And there’s more good news: groups, businesses, and individuals across the US are joining the effort to protect boreal birds. Learn more at www.borealbirds.org and check out BirdNote’s photo blog and shows about the boreal forest at www.birdnote.org/blog/2015/04/meet-birds-boreal-forest.

Did you know?

- The boreal forest of North America is an intact ecosystem that contains the world’s largest network of streams, rivers, and wetlands.

- Nearly half of all birds in the US and Canada — including 80% of waterfowl and 50% of warblers — rely on the boreal forest for nesting or migratory stopover habitat.

- Nearly two-thirds of all forest product exports from Canada’s boreal forest go to the US, so our choices make a difference! Look for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo on wood and paper products and choose paper with the greatest post-consumer recycled fiber content.
Thank You, Donors!

Your gifts inspire people of all ages to notice, to care about, and to protect birds and their habitats. Thank you!

This list represents gifts and pledges made in 2015.

### GOLDEN EAGLES

**$100,000+**

Anonymous (3)

### GREAT BLUE HERONS

**$50,000–$99,999**

Anonymous

The Bobolink Foundation

Mary Pigott

Edward W. Rose III

Family Fund of The Dallas Foundation

### TRUMPETER SWANS

**$20,000–$49,999**

Ellen Blackstone and Chris Athweg

Sarah Merner and Craig McKibbon

Nancy Nordhoff and Lynn Hayes

Thomas and Annalee Luhman

Gordon Orians and Marianne Kogon

Jerry Tone and Martha Wyckoff

Lucy R. Waletzky

### KINGFISHERS

**$10,000–$19,999**

The Brained Foundation

The Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation

Lenore Hanauer

Clarence E. Heller

Charitable Foundation

Satterberg Foundation

Ellen Wallach and Tom Satterberg Foundation

Charitable Foundation

Lenore Hanauer

The Brainerd Foundation

Anonymous

The Boeing Company Gift

### WOODPECKERS

**$5,000–$9,999**

Anonymous (2)

The Boeing Company Gift

Matching Program

### WARBLECTERS

**$100–$499**

Douglass and Susan Adkins

Ingrid E. Akerblom

Andrea Allen

Christina and Ben Anderson

Shirley Anderson

Diana and Jane Armstrong

Paul Ameson

Bacchi

Marygrace and Peter Barber

Mary Barry

Edgiva Barrie

Valerie Berg

Nancy Bernard

Dominic Black

Adrienne Bodie

Sallie Bodie

Mary Jane Boland

Erlin and Mark Borden

Raylene Braga

Theresa and Robert Britschgi

### MEADOWLARKS

**$1,000–$4,999**

Lauri Adams

Chris Cluet

Joe and Barbara Ellis

Steve Hallstrom and Cecelia Boulais

Suzanne Hittman

Liam Laverty and Yazmin Mehdii

Estate of Sandra Lee McCloud

Colene McKee and Bill Denzel

The Mockingbird Fund

Todd and Chris Peterson

Judy Pigott

Scott and Kimberly Rice

Christopher Rogers

Seattle Foundation

Adam Sedgley and Kristi Sartunak

Jim and Burnley Snyder

John Teutsch and Mary Foster

Peg and Rick Young Foundation

Kim Wels

### SANDPIPERS

**$500–$999**

Richard and Eleanore Baxendale

Charles Bergman and Susan Mann

Eleanor Boba and Alan Humphrey

Emory Bundy and Noel Angel

Robert Ewing

Colleen Freidow

Susan Lane

Linda Larzon and Gerald Johnson

Dorothy Ling and Mark DeWeirdt

Joan Lupacchino

Gerald and Linda Nordberg

John and Suzanne Price

Bill and Wendy Rabel

Nancy Rumbel and Ron Rabin

Sonya Schneider and Stuart Nagae

Bruce and Christy Schwager

Richard and Linda Sedgley

Eugene Sine

Dan Sizemore

Sue and Barry Stevens

Susan Wyckoff

### CHICKADEES

**up to $99**

Cynthia Lindseth

Peggy Aasheim

Audrey Abouaf\la

Jamie Acker

Chuck and Marylou Adams

Sylvia Al\la

Alexandra Allen

Suzanne Andersen

Carol Anderson

Kris Anderson

Nora Anderson

Richard Ashford

Lynn Asmann

Glenn and Mary Lou Austin

Mary Ayres

Judith Bailey

Gloria Baldi

Rick Ball

Carol Barnard

Bob and Anne Barry

Julianne Bass

Katherine Beard

Stanley Beatle

Susan Beauvais

Kim Behrens

Lynne Bernstein

Karen Bertling

The Best @ Dianne B

Paul Bigelow

Richard Bimbam

Emily Blystone

Merrill Black

Allan Borden and Norma Kimmerson

James Bosley

Margaux Bouchegnies

Howard Bowen

Sandra Bowman

Harden Boyce

Robin Boyer

Claire Bracaglia

Gary Breidenstein

Madelyn Brown

Kimberly Cahoon

Joan Cubshe

Bing Cunnin

Yvonne Burch-Hartley

Nancy Burkhalter

Karen Burns

Paul Busse

Mary Butler

Wendy Cadden

Phyllis Cairns

Beverley and Jeffrey Campbell

Cynthia Cappello

Tom Carlson

Frances Carpenter

Harry Carrel

Linda Carroll

Janet Carter

Kimberley Carter

Miriam Caruso

Laurie and John Jelinek

Karen and Joe Zook

### CHICKADEES

**up to $99**

Cynthia Lindseth

Peggy Aasheim

Audrey Abouaf\la

Jamie Acker

Chuck and Marylou Adams

Sylvia Al\la

Alexandra Allen

Suzanne Andersen

Carol Anderson

Kris Anderson

Nora Anderson

Richard Ashford

Lynn Asmann

Glenn and Mary Lou Austin

Mary Ayres

Judith Bailey

Gloria Baldi

Rick Ball

Carol Barnard

Bob and Anne Barry

Julianne Bass

Katherine Beard

Stanley Beatle

Susan Beauvais

Kim Behrens

Lynne Bernstein

Karen Bertling

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Wendy Cadden

Phyllis Cairns

Beverley and Jeffrey Campbell

Cynthia Cappello

Tom Carlson

Frances Carpenter

Harry Carrel

Linda Carroll

Janet Carter

Kimberley Carter

Miriam Caruso

Laurie and John Jelinek

Karen and Joe Zook
Special Recognition

*BirdNote is grateful to the following philanthropic leaders and partners in 2015*

**The Bobolink Foundation** for supporting ongoing production of “Sounds and Stewards of the North American Landscape.” This series educates listeners about the amazing abilities of birds, promotes aural literacy, and celebrates people involved in bird conservation.

**National Audubon Society** for sharing BirdNote stories with its members online, through social media, and in *Audubon Magazine*.

**The Macaulay Library** of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for providing most of the bird sounds featured in BirdNote shows.

**BirdNote’s “Anonymous Champion”** for nurturing the development of the 2015 – 2018 strategic plan.

**Forterra** (www.forterra.org) for providing office space and meeting space for BirdNote, and for sharing BirdNote with its members online and through social media.
Thank You, Donors!

Nancy Fabrizi-Miller
Susan Fahey
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Sieg Jason
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Jennifer Janson
Hugh Jennings
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John Johnson
Lynn Johnston
Jennifer Joliffe
Linda Jorgensen
Brent Kammann
Margi Kamin
Barbara Karl
Anne Karlstrom
Patricia Karman
Darcy Kelley
Christy Kelly
P. Kelly
Gary Kelsberg and
Sarah Sfarafian
Mark and Jacqueline Kendzior
Robert Kessin
Viki Kettle
Mirelle Key
Gregory Kinnetz
Allan Borden and Norma Kinnire
Kimmse-Berrerd
Deborah Knire
Joseph Kian
Margaret Koehler and
Michael Murphy
Lea Koubia
Roselle Kovitz
Daniel Kruger
Anna Kruschwitz
Marcella Kurowski
Mascha Kushner
Dyania Lambert
Doug Lamerson
Marilee Lampman
Jon Landers
Jane Langenes
Mark Boswell and
Sara Larimore
Earl Lasseter
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Eileen and Pierre Lauzon
Paul Lavalle
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Ronal Leamon
Mark Leggett
William Lehmann
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Susan Lisk
Carrie Little
Judith Little
Rachel Lodge
Robert Long
Margie Low
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Elizabeth Marshall
Robert Martin
Tiffany Mason
George Mastredonato
Robert and Holiday Matchett
Karen Matson
Catherine Matthewson
Christina Matto
Maria Maudon
Ronald Mauze
Sheri McAdoo
Iris McAuley
James McBain
Timothy McCarty
Maggi McGonnell
Gary and Cassandra McCullough
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Remembering Idie Ulsh

Idie Ulsh, a long-time science advisor to BirdNote, passed away in early June 2015. BirdNote celebrates Idie’s love of birds and butterflies and her belief in the lasting value of environmental education.

Idie served as a science advisor to BirdNote for more than a decade. We are grateful for Idie’s many contributions to BirdNote’s success, including her tireless promotion of BirdNote in the state of Washington and beyond.

From the Samish Flats and the North Cascades of Washington to Central and South America, Idie loved traveling to observe birds and butterflies. We can honor Idie by taking time to enjoy and appreciate nature, wherever our travels take us.

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Birds connect us with the joy and wonder of nature. By telling vivid, sound-rich stories about birds and the challenges they face, BirdNote inspires listeners to care about the natural world—and take steps to protect it.