

BIODIVERSITYWORKS CELEBRATES ITS 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

On March 25, 2021, BiodiversityWorks celebrated its tenth anniversary! In our first decade, we've grown from two staff members sharing a rented one-room office to owning our own building with four full-time staff assisted by interns and seasonal workers. We've mentored dozens of interested young people in wildlife studies and biology. From our beginning, we have worked ceaselessly to protect beach-nesting birds all across the island; in 2020, birds on our beaches reached their highest level of productivity yet! In addition to monitoring piping plovers, oystercatchers, and terns, we've steadily added research and monitoring projects on a wide range of other rare or important species including black racers, northern long-eared bats, and spotted turtles. Thanks to the many partners, donors, and volunteers who made all our success possible! The photos below recall and celebrate some of the best moments from our first decade: we hope you enjoy this look back at our first decade of monitoring, mentoring, research, and education.



2011: Beach-Nesting Birds was where it all began for BiodiversityWorks. Founders Luanne Johnson (BWorks Director) and Liz Olson (Assistant Director) met working the beaches, and caring for these threatened and fascinating birds remains a central activity for the organization. *Photo: Benjamin Clock*



2012: The start of our mentoring program for young naturalists. Many of the young people who have passed through this program have gone on to pursue careers in science. *Photo: Katie Ruppel*



2013: One of our first monitoring projects was documenting belted kingfisher and bank-nesting swallow burrows around the island.



2014: We began our ongoing research on bats, inspired by the question of why the northern long-eared bat persisted on Martha's Vineyard after it had disappeared from most of the Northeast following the advent of White Nose Syndrome in the United States in 2006.



2015: Willets! The best day of 2015 was when we finally retrieved a willet geolocator from one of our tagged willets, giving us detailed information about the bird's migration timing and destination. We learned that it is easy to catch "a" willet - but not so easy to catch "the" willet!



2016: Sammi Chaves and Oscar Thomson check turtle traps for Oscar's independent senior thesis project on painted turtles. These two were part of BWorks from early in our history, and watching these dedicated and accomplished young people follow their passions has been one of the most rewarding parts of our first ten years.



2017: We began an ongoing black skimmer banding project. Martha's Vineyard represents the northern edge of the breeding range of these birds. We teamed up with The Trustees of Reservations and MassWildlife to band chicks in an effort to learn of more about their migration, site fidelity, and chick survival.



2018: A tip of the hat to the many volunteers who have assisted our work! Some have been helping us since the very beginning. Volunteers assist with everything from erecting shorebird fencing to tracking wildlife to maintaining our office building. Thanks to all you – you’ve been a big part of our success.



2019: We concluded an important three-year study of habitat use and movements by our crew of four radio-tagged black racers, Audrey, Katama, Scooter and Liatrix. These magnificent snakes have grown rare on the Vineyard, victims of habitat loss and fragmentation, and our research will help plan conservation measures for the future. *Photo: Jack Yuen*



2020: A milestone for our shorebird program! For the first year since we began, our piping plovers exceeded the state productivity goal of 1.24 chicks/pair! It was a successful year for our other species, as well. *Photo: David Meen*



2021: We’ve spent a full year now operating out of our own office building. We could not have made it this far without the support of our community, donors, board members, and volunteers. We thank all of you who have supported BWorks over the last 10 years and look forward to continuing our efforts of conserving the island’s wildlife and biodiversity.