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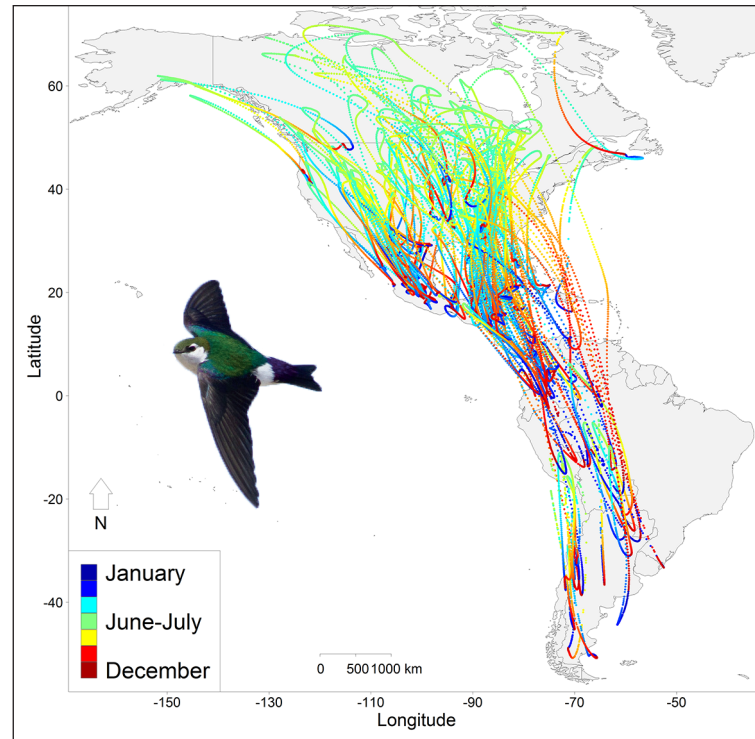
FUELING SCIENCE

Cornell Lab of Ornithology researchers published 105 peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals in 2015, a 50% increase over 2012

REVEALING THE GRAND PATTERN OF ANNUAL MIGRATION

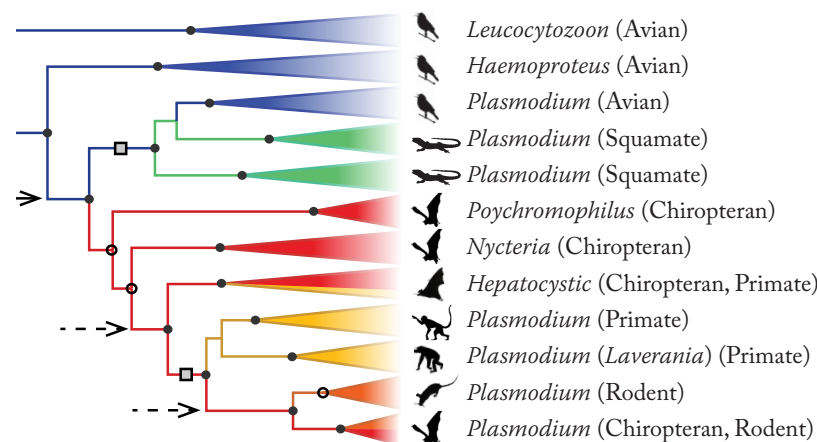
In January Frank La Sorte and coauthors published research that documented—for the first time—the migratory movements for 118 bird species throughout the Western Hemisphere. The study found that most of these birds follow a clockwise loop, migrating along the coast and out over the Atlantic Ocean in fall, then returning farther inland in spring. “By using eBird data and other forms of migration tracking information, we’re getting a more detailed picture than ever before about where and when birds migrate,” said La Sorte. “That’s the kind of information we need to make smart conservation decisions.”

Right: An animated graphic of Frank La Sorte’s bird migration research went viral online, where more than 3 million people watched the dancing dots for each species travel from North to South America and back. See it for yourself at bit.ly/migrationdots. Inset: Violet-green Swallow by Dennis Cooke/Macaulay Library.



MALARIA FAMILY TREE LEADS BACK TO BIRDS

About 500,000 people worldwide die of malaria each year, so modern medicine needs to better understand how the disease evolves. In March, PhD student Holly Lutz and coauthors published research that presented DNA analyses for 170 lineages of malaria parasites, shedding light on the little-known malarial family tree—including the discovery that malaria has its roots in bird hosts, from which it spread to bats, and then on to other mammals. “We can’t begin to understand how malaria spread to humans until we understand its evolutionary history,” explained Lutz. “In learning about its past, we may be better able to understand the effects it has on us.” People can’t catch avian malaria, however. Of the 400 strains of malaria worldwide, only four or five strains affect humans.



LAB CHRISTENS A NEW RESEARCH VESSEL

JAEGER

In June scientists in the Bioacoustics Research Program made the maiden voyage on a newly acquired 42-foot seafaring boat to retrieve acoustic recording devices along the Massachusetts coast. Moored in Long Island and christened the *Jaeger* (after the Long-tailed Jaeger, a migratory seabird), the boat will be used for research on ocean habitats, including studies on whales and seabirds.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FRED CHANNELL



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEN WALSH
Cornell Lab postdoctoral researcher Jennifer Walsh outfitting a Saltmarsh Sparrow with an ID leg band along the coast of Maine.

RIISING TIDES ARE SWAMPING SPARROW NESTS

Climate change is changing the world for birds, especially for species in coastal areas. Postdoctoral researcher Jennifer Walsh has been studying the Saltmarsh Sparrow, the only songbird that lives year-round in East Coast saltmarshes. The nesting of Saltmarsh Sparrows is exquisitely synched with tidal cycles—26 days from nest building to fledging chicks, neatly squeezed between the monthly full moon tides. But there’s very little wiggle room. Walsh and her collaborators have documented that tidal flooding is the leading cause of nest loss and chick mortality. She says a sea-level rise of just two inches may swamp all of the



SALTMARSH SPARROW BY MARK JOHNSON/MACAULAY LIBRARY

RESEARCH ENDOWMENTS

Sustainable funding for future generations of scientists

Highlights of endowed research from the past year:

Ivy Expeditions Fund

The first behavioral research on an enigmatic bird

The Sapayoa’s scientific name is *Sapayoa aenigma*. Indeed it is an enigmatic bird that lives in Panama and South America, while all of its evolutionary relatives live in Africa and Asia. This surprising piece of biogeography—one species separated from its ancestry by an entire ocean—had been suggested by genetic data, but never supported by behavioral data. That changed with research published in *The Auk*, the journal of the American Ornithologists’ Union, based on field studies by a team of Cornell University students and recent graduates. The Ivy Expeditions team, including under-graduates Sarah Dzielski, Jonathan Hruska, and Benjamin Van Doren, spent a month at a field camp in remote eastern Panama searching for and observing Sapayoa nests. They came back to Ithaca with a bundle of discoveries, including the surprise that Sapayoas are cooperative breeders (males and females, adult and immature birds all help feed the young). Many of the Sapayoa’s Old World relatives are also cooperative breeders.



THE SAPAYOA, THE NEW WORLD’S MOST ENIGMATIC BIRD. BENJAMIN VAN DOREN

Robert L. and Margaret Craig Education Fund

Professional mentorship for Caribbean biologists



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF GERBRACHT
At a Cornell Lab workshop in Jamaica, participants learned techniques in bird specimen preparation and preservation.

The West Indies is a hotspot for bird species diversity and conservation, and young scientists in the region are eager for ornithological training. Last July Cornell Lab ornithologists traveled to Jamaica to conduct a bird specimen preservation workshop at a meeting of the BirdsCaribbean ornithological society. The workshop was filled to capacity, with participants from 13 countries representing institutions from local conservation organizations and government agencies to universities. Afterward, event organizers in Jamaica asked that the Cornell Lab conduct the workshop again at future BirdsCaribbean meetings.

INNOVATING FOR CONSERVATION

"37% of North American bird species need urgent conservation action" –*The State of North America's Birds 2016 Report*

AN INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON NORTH AMERICA'S BIRDS



In May, Environment and Climate Change Canada Minister Catherine McKenna presented *The State of North America's Birds* report at a trination-al meeting of Canadian, American, and Mexican government agencies in Ottawa. Cornell Lab Director of Conservation Science and Garvin Professor of Ornithology Amanda Rodewald (far right) also spoke about the report, which was produced by the Cornell Lab and partners.

LAND TRUSTS FOR BIRDS

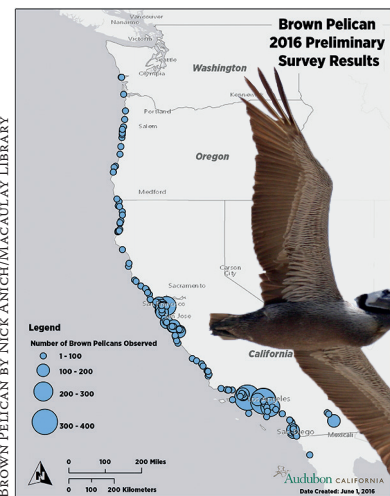
Land trusts manage more than 24 million acres of private lands, an area equal to the entire National Park System in the lower 48 states. In June the Cornell Lab partnered with the national Land Trust Alliance to launch **birdtrust.org**, a website with resources, tools, and technical support to empower land trusts to make strategic conservation decisions. "We can't move the needle on declining bird populations until we are able to address their conservation needs on private lands," explained Ron Rohrbaugh, Cornell Lab assistant director of Conservation Science. Funding for this initiative was provided by the Sarah K. de Coizart Foundation.



PHOTO OF BOBOLINK COURTESY OF ABBIE CHURCH

A BROWN PELICAN BIRDING BLITZ

In April Audubon California and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service put out a call for eBird-ers along the Pacific Coast and Baja California Peninsula to go looking for Brown Pelicans. In recent years, pelican breeding productivity in the region has been poor, just as anchovy and sardine populations (key food sources for pelicans) have collapsed. With concerns growing about the health of the pelican population, this two-day, crowd-sourced survey provided a comprehensive look at pelican abundance and age distribution. "eBird allows us to take a snapshot of a single species at a specific point in time across a wide geographical area," said Brian Sullivan, co-leader of the program for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "By tapping into the eyes and ears of bird watchers, we can gather data that can then be used to protect the birds we all care about." Over time, repeated eBird pelican surveys will provide a trend line that can be used to analyze population trends.



CALIFORNIA CONDOR CAM

California Condor #111 is a living legend. Hatched in captivity at the San Diego Zoo and released into the wild, she has been breeding and contributing nestlings to California's wild condor flock since 2001. This past February she nested in a cliffside cavern in Ventura County—and a Cornell Lab Bird Cam was there. Broadcast in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Santa Barbara Zoo, and the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, the live-streaming cam attracted more than 250,000 web viewers from 150 countries.



The Cornell Lab's Condor Cam broadcast the first-ever public viewing of a hatching California Condor chick.

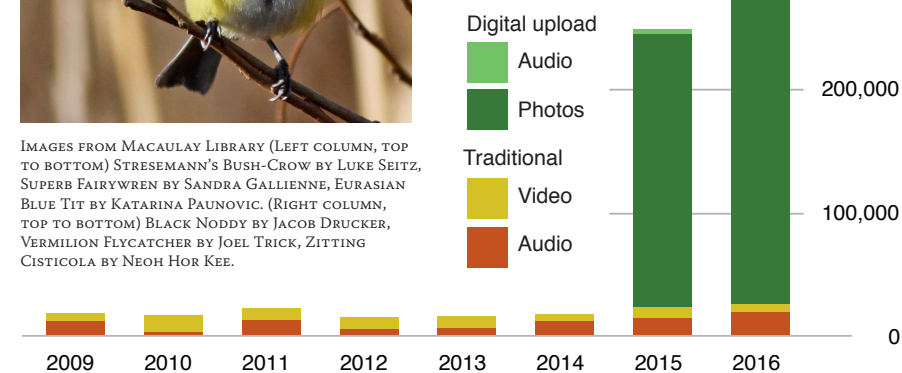
A JOURNAL FOR CITIZEN-SCIENCE

The Cornell Lab has been at the forefront of citizen science since 1966. Today more than 350,000 people worldwide contribute to the Lab's citizen-science projects, including eBird, Project FeederWatch, and NestWatch. In May citizen science crossed a new threshold as a scientific discipline with the launch of a journal dedicated to supporting the practice of citizen science—*Citizen Science: Theory and Practice*. Rick Bonney, Cornell Lab director of Public Engagement in Science, is editor-in-chief of the open-access, peer-reviewed journal.

MACAULAY LIBRARY GROWS 400%



IMAGES FROM MACAULAY LIBRARY (LEFT COLUMN, TOP TO BOTTOM) STRESEMANN'S BUSH-CROW BY LUKE SEITZ, SUPERB FAIRYWREN BY SANDRA GALLIENNE, EURASIAN BLUE TIT BY KATARINA PAUNOVIC. (RIGHT COLUMN, TOP TO BOTTOM) BLACK NODDY BY JACOB DRUCKER, VERMILION FLYCATCHER BY JOEL TRICK, ZITTING CISTICOLA BY NEOH HOR KEE.



In 2015 the Linda R. and William E. Macaulay Library began receiving natural history media submissions from the public via eBird. So far in 2016, the library has received more than 1.1 million new contributions of audio and photo files. The vast majority of those new files are photos, but the library also received 20,000 audio files of nearly 3,000 species, including about 200 species new to The Macaulay Library—making the world's largest archive of natural sounds even larger.



POWERFUL MULTIMEDIA WITH A CONSERVATION FOCUS

On the heels of the 2015 PBS documentary *The Sagebrush Sea*, the Cornell Lab's Multimedia Program launched the Conservation Media initiative for the world's most at-risk bird species. The initiative produces science-based stories and first-person field reports on species and the environmental conditions they face; forges alliances with local and international organizations to accomplish specific conservation objectives; works closely with partners to create top-quality stories and reports, educational tools, and media kits for long-term public outreach; and disseminates media to organizations dedicated to long-term impacts.

For example, in Brazil the team is working with local conservation group Aquasis on the critically endangered Araripe Manakin, a newly discovered species that lives exclusively in a small area of remnant habitat. In the Bering Sea, they are gathering media on seabird-nesting islands for partners working on international Arctic policy-making through the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna working group. And in central Africa, they are creating communications tools for the government of Gabon and the USFWS International Trade Affairs office to highlight the implications of trade in the Gray Parrot.

EMPOWERING THROUGH EDUCATION

“People like Dr. Bonter maintain Cornell’s reputation as the outstanding undergraduate institution that it is, and pave the way for its students’ future success.”— student from David Bonter’s class

CORNELL LAB SCIENTIST RECEIVES HIGH HONOR FROM COLLEGE

The Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences named David Bonter as the 2016 Professor of Merit, the college’s highest honor for recognizing faculty engagement with undergraduates. Nominated by the Class of 2016, Bonter received high marks from his students for the field ornithology courses he teaches on campus and at the Shoals Marine Laboratory on Appledore Island off the coast of Maine. “Dr. David Bonter is both an exceptional educator and tireless academic who has helped shape Cornell’s undergraduate research program into one of the strongest in the country,” wrote one student on the nomination form. Bonter, who is also the Cornell Lab’s Arthur A. Allen Director of Citizen Science, mentors more than 15 undergraduates in a research-focused lab group that has published a series of papers in prestigious scientific journals.



PHOTO OF DAVID BONTER AND STUDENT BY MARILU LOPEZ FREYTS

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCIENCE LEADERS

Postdoctoral programs at the Cornell Lab offer promising young scientists the opportunity to launch their careers at an Ivy League research institution.

Dr. Scott Taylor recently accepted a professorship in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado Boulder after four years at the Cornell Lab. As a Cornell postdoctoral researcher, Taylor published groundbreaking evolutionary biology research on how climate change is affecting the Black-capped and Carolina chickadee hybrid zone, on the evolutionary history of the world’s redpoll finches, and on the remarkable genetic similarity between Golden-winged and Blue-winged warblers.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT TAYLOR

Dr. Alexander Lees has accepted a lectureship in tropical ecology at Manchester Metropolitan University after a year of biodiversity conservation research at the Cornell Lab. Lees was also a member of the research consortium Sustainable Amazon Network. News stories about Lees’ research on hydropower dam threats to the Amazon’s biodiversity ran in the *Washington Post* and the *Daily Mail* in the United Kingdom.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEXANDER LEES

In 2017 the newly created Edward W. Rose Postdoctoral Fellowship will host its first researcher. The Rose Fellowship is a competitive program that recruits scholars whose research interests align with the Cornell Lab’s mission “to interpret and conserve the earth’s biological diversity through research, citizen science, and education focused on birds.”

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PHOTO COURTESY OF BENJAMIN VAN DOREN

Cornell Lab director John W. Fitzpatrick and Benjamin Van Doren at Cornell University’s 2016 graduation ceremony.

FROM 3RD-GRADE BIRD SLEUTHER TO OXFORD PHD

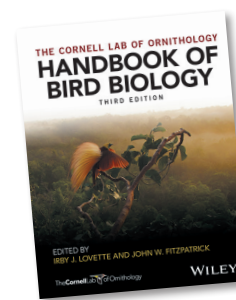
At age 22, Benjamin Van Doren is already beginning his second decade of scientific research—and he just graduated from Cornell University with his bachelor’s degree. It began when a 3rd-grade teacher hooked Van Doren on birds with the Cornell Lab’s science curriculum (now known as BirdSleuth). Later, in high school, he pursued an ambitious research project on migratory birds that earned him a finalist slot in the nationwide Intel Science Talent Search. As a Cornell undergrad he wrote and contributed to nine academic papers—a record some postdoctoral fellows might envy. After graduation, he was awarded the prestigious Marshall Scholarship to attend Oxford University as a PhD student next year.

COMING SOON: MERLIN EN ESPAÑOL

More than 1 million smartphone users have downloaded Merlin, the Cornell Lab’s bird identification app. Soon Merlin will relaunch for an even larger audience in the Americas (where Spanish speakers outnumber English speakers 2-to-1) with *Merlin en español*. The new Spanish-language Merlin app is being developed in partnership with the Mexican conservation agency CONABIO. It will include 500 additional species found in Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala.



HANDBOOK OF BIRD BIOLOGY VERSION 3.0



In 1972, the Cornell Lab introduced the first college-level correspondence course in ornithology, “A Home Study Course in Bird Biology”, along with the *Handbook of Bird Biology* textbook. Since then, more than 15,000 people in 65 countries have enrolled in the Home Study Course. In 2016 Wiley-Blackwell published a third edition of the *Handbook of Bird Biology* with expanded and updated coverage of all the world’s birds. The new *Handbook* is connected to online learning tools, such as interactive modules and animated illustrations, via the Cornell Lab’s Bird Academy website at birdbiology.org. “I think it’s the most incredible companion website for any textbook ever published, not just among ornithology texts, but about any subject,” says Irby Lovette, *Handbook* 3rd edition editor and Fuller Professor of Ornithology at the Cornell Lab. Bird Academy is also offering a new course, *Ornithology: Comprehensive Bird Biology*, that uses the *Handbook* as the required text.

INTRODUCING THE CORNELL LAB PUBLISHING GROUP

In March 2016 the Cornell Lab Publishing Group released a set of children’s books, bird coloring books, and birdsong guides with built-in players using sounds from the Macaulay Library. Featured in bookstores across the country, books from the publishing group further the Cornell Lab’s mission to nurture new generations in appreciating birds. See current and future offerings at cornelllabpublishinggroup.com.



BIRDS AS A NATURAL SCIENCE LEARNING TOOL



Cornell Lab education specialist Lilly Briggs introduced Colombian students to the birds around them on a nature walk at a BirdSleuth workshop in the village of Andes.

“Before I did not know how to distinguish birds from one another and did not give careful attention while they were singing,” said Samuel Suárez Vargas, an elementary school student who participated in BirdSleuth learning games in Antioquia, Colombia. “But now I have a different view about birds, and I am very interested.”

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SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OUR DONORS

We are deeply grateful to donors at every level, all of whom make it possible for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to advance the understanding of nature and engage people of all ages in learning about birds and protecting the planet.

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I've benefitted enormously from a long-time association with the Lab, from my first birdsong recording experience in 1988 to my current role as chair of the Lab's Administrative Board. The Lab has strengthened my passion for birds, provided me with innumerable challenges and learning opportunities, and taught me the essential role you play as a Lab member.

Thank you for sharing my passion and for contributing to the Lab's successes in 2015. The Lab is a strong, purposeful, and vibrant organization. Its future is bright and, thanks to friends like you, it will advance its mission with confidence, enthusiasm, and a strong base of support.

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A diagram explaining the scientific process was provided to BirdSleuth students as part of the Investigating Evidence curriculum for students in grades 4 through 12. Illustration by Bartels Science Illustration Intern Misaki Ouchida.

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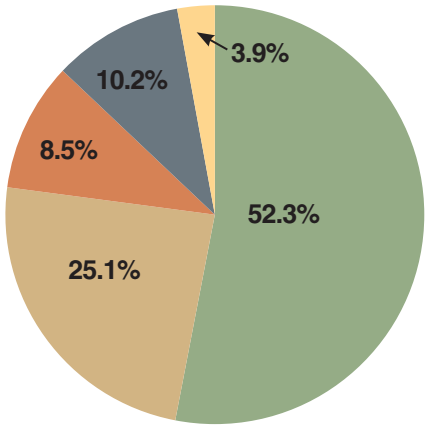
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FINANCIAL REPORT

2016 FISCAL YEAR—JULY 1, 2015 TO JUNE 30, 2016

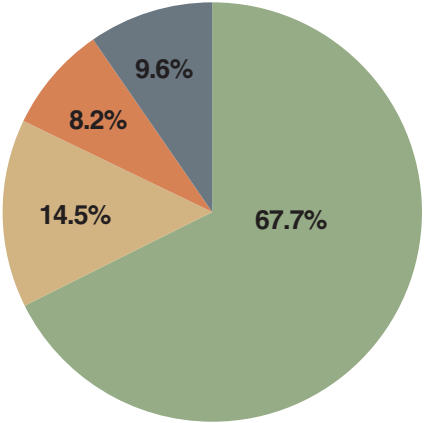
THANKS TO FRIENDS LIKE YOU, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a healthy and effective organization. Nested within the fabric of Cornell University, the Lab's strength lies not only in its unique institutional model that weaves together research and academics with outreach and conservation programs, but in the support of thousands of members and donors. As you can see from the pie charts to the right, membership revenues and gifts are the single largest source of support for our programs and projects. Our members and friends provided 52% of our annual revenue, a total of \$14.5 million that underwrites 85% of our program costs. The bar chart below depicts healthy growth over the past 10 years with revenues exceeding expenditures, allowing the Lab to continually expand and strengthen its vital research, education, and conservation efforts.

FY16 REVENUES



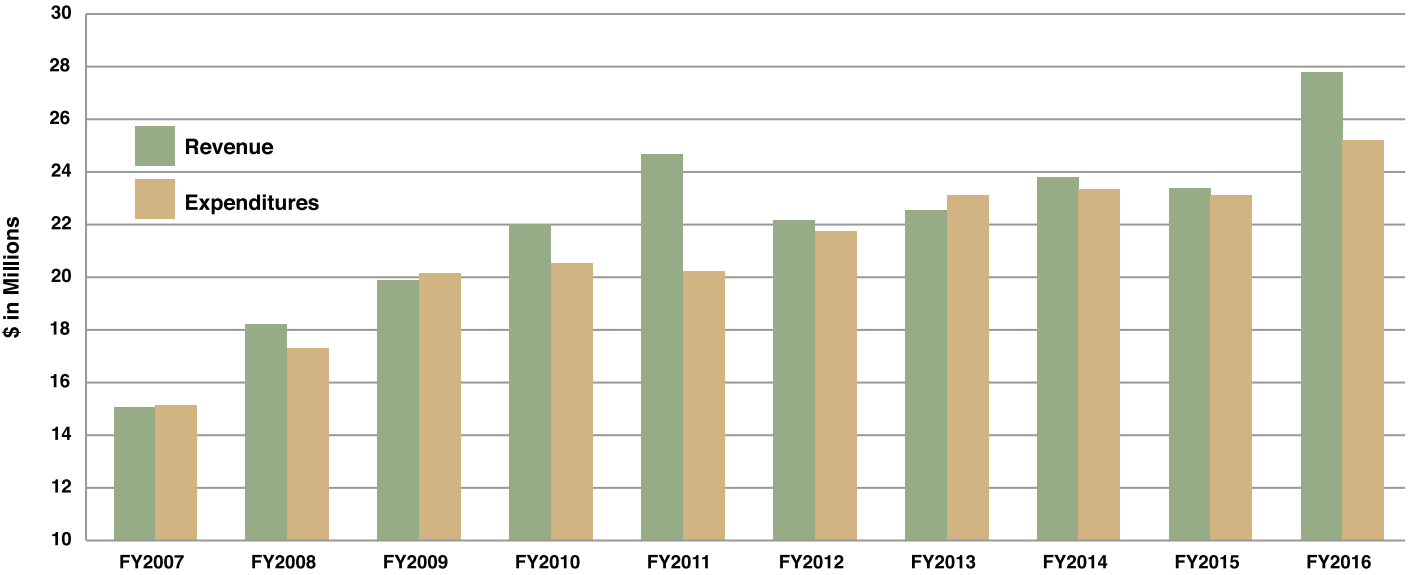
Membership & Gifts	\$14,536,333
Grants & Contracts	\$6,995,605
Program Income	\$2,372,955
Invested Funds Income	\$2,833,967
Other	\$1,071,888
TOTAL REVENUE	\$27,810,748

FY16 EXPENDITURES



Program	\$17,060,606
Development	\$3,664,979
Administration & Infrastructure	\$2,074,143
University Support Costs	\$2,427,463
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$25,227,191

ANNUAL OPERATING REVENUE AND EXPENSE, 2007-2016



If you have questions, comments, or requests for the Cornell Lab's membership and development team, please contact Bramble Klipple at 607-254-1105 or bck42@cornell.edu or Scott Sutcliffe at 607-254-2424 or sas10@cornell.edu.