



**BECOMING A**

**YOUTH ADVISORY  
PANEL MEMBER**



BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY



# WHAT IS BTO YOUTH?

BTO advances our knowledge of birds by monitoring UK bird populations using data collected by of tens of thousands of volunteer bird enthusiasts, and through wide-ranging research. To make sure that young people are well-represented in the organisation and its work, BTO set up the Youth Advisory Panel (YAP). The panel is responsible for implementing their Youth Engagement Strategy (2023-2028). Whereas YAP is a strategic group who come up with new ideas and plan our wider work, Youth Representatives organise events for young people in their communities, helping them to access nature and birdwatching. BTO Youth's vision for the future is that of:

**'A diverse, vibrant community of young birders supported by BTO, with accessible, youth-led opportunities inspiring young people to engage with nature and science.'**



## What are our values?

Anyone who is part of BTO Youth, as staff or as a volunteer, agrees to a set of values on how we treat each other and the world around us. As individuals and as a group, we are:

- **Inclusive & accessible:** we respect, welcome and include anyone to the BTO Youth network and remove barriers to nature and birdwatching
- **Youth-led:** all the work we do is created, organised and hosted by young people; they are at the heart of our decision-making
- **Helping people grow:** we help young people to learn and develop their skills
- **Collaborative & transparent:** we work together, both within our teams as well as with partner organisations and we listen to everyone's opinions
- **Innovative & dynamic:** we have a creative, original and bold approach to engaging young people in nature
- **Celebrating nature:** we welcome people who connect with nature in whatever way feels most comfortable to them and support them in connecting with nature in new ways





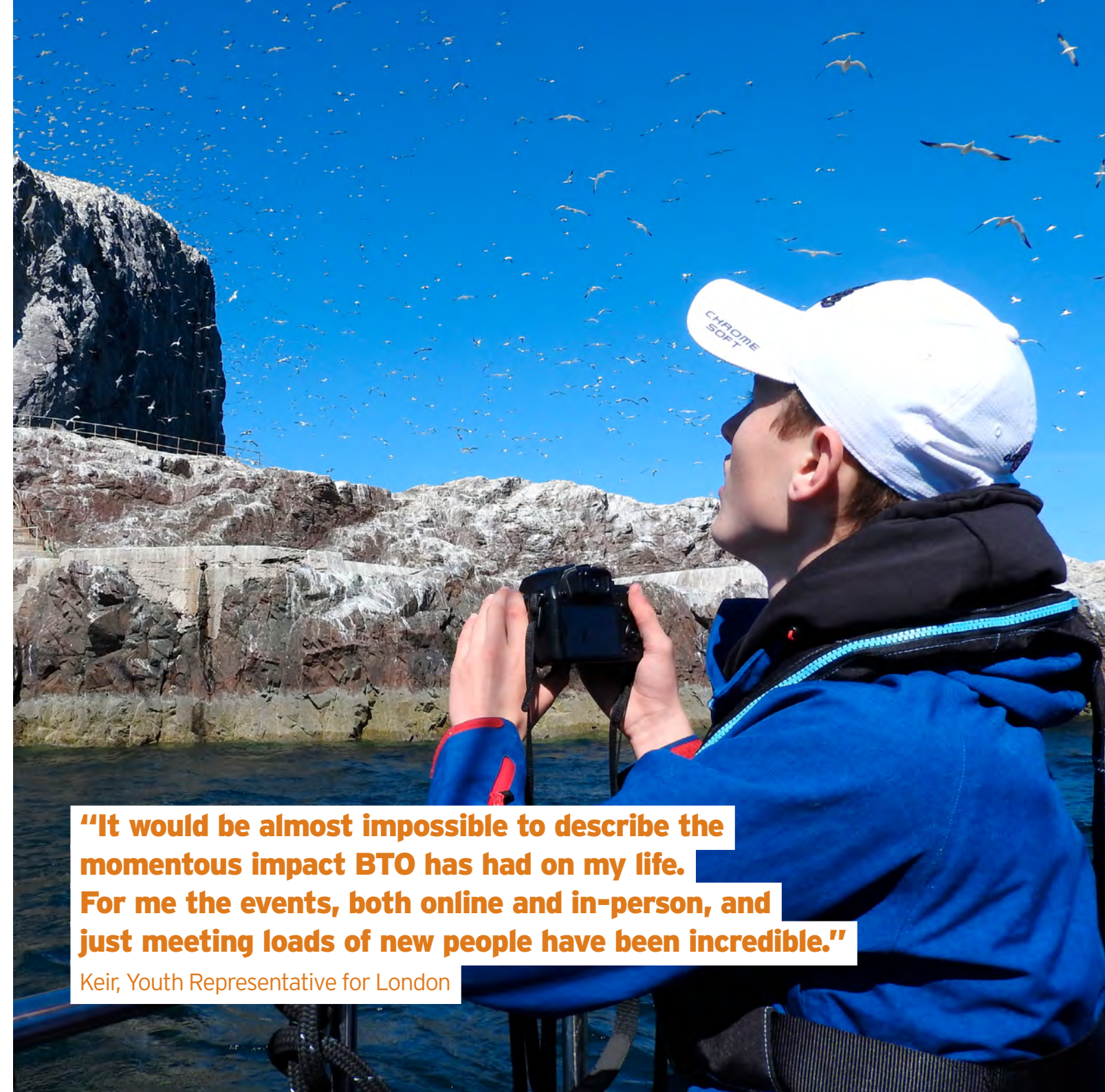
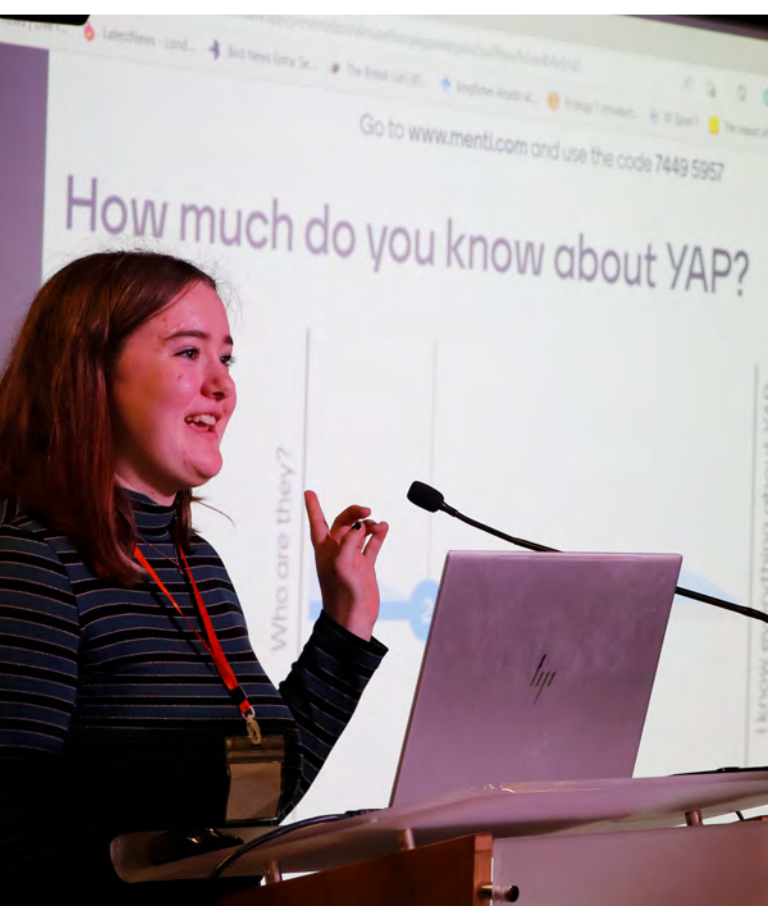
## What does being on YAP look like?

Being on YAP looks different for everyone, because it depends on how much time you have and what your interests are. Typically, the bulk of YAP work takes place on Zoom. Different working groups within YAP tend to meet at least once a month, and so there are usually meetings once a week or every two weeks, but you don't have to attend them all.

There are also busier and quieter periods in the year, so sometimes there are more meetings than usual. We have working groups on topics such as mental health, the equipment donation scheme, the youth engagement strategy, and important partnerships (such as the Youth in Nature Summit), with YAP working in a strategic way to help BTO offer more opportunities to young people. They do this through schemes, events (working with Youth Representatives to deliver these) and representing young voices in decision-making at BTO.

Alongside this, YAP members often join BTO staff at in-person events. These can include awards ceremonies, meetings with donors, conferences, and events organised by Youth Representatives. We also organise an annual get-together over a long weekend, so we can all meet in person and spend time together as a team.

YAP members support the Youth Representatives, helping them achieve their goals as well as ensuring they are included in our wider work.



**"It would be almost impossible to describe the momentous impact BTO has had on my life. For me the events, both online and in-person, and just meeting loads of new people have been incredible."**

Keir, Youth Representative for London



## Who are we looking for?

We're looking for motivated young people who want to join a community and make a difference. You should apply if you:

- ▶ Are **between 16 and 24** years old
- ▶ **Speak and understand English** well
- ▶ Are **passionate about nature** (but you don't need to know everything about birds!)
- ▶ Like working **as part of a team**
- ▶ Are **open-minded** and **respectful** of all people, even if they are different, or think differently, to you
- ▶ Want to **help other young people** find their connection with nature
- ▶ Are **available to join virtual meetings** on Zoom at least once a month (we can provide a tablet if you don't have access to a computer), and in-person meetings at least once a year (all expenses are covered)

By applying for YAP, you commit to joining the Panel for at least one year if you are successful, with the option to stay longer if you want to (until you turn 26).

## What do we offer you?

This is a volunteer position, which means there is no pay for this work. However, we will:

- ▶ Cover **all your expenses**, including meals, transport, accommodation, and training
- ▶ Offer you **extensive training** to develop a wide range of transferrable skills, such as First Aid, networking, presenting, planning meetings and events, leadership, and much more
- ▶ Opportunities to **represent BTO at events**, such as conferences, exhibitions, fairs, university events, and more
- ▶ Give you **1:1 support**; ranging from finding opportunities in topics you are interested in or need help with, to help with applying for jobs
- ▶ **Provide references** for you on job applications or university applications

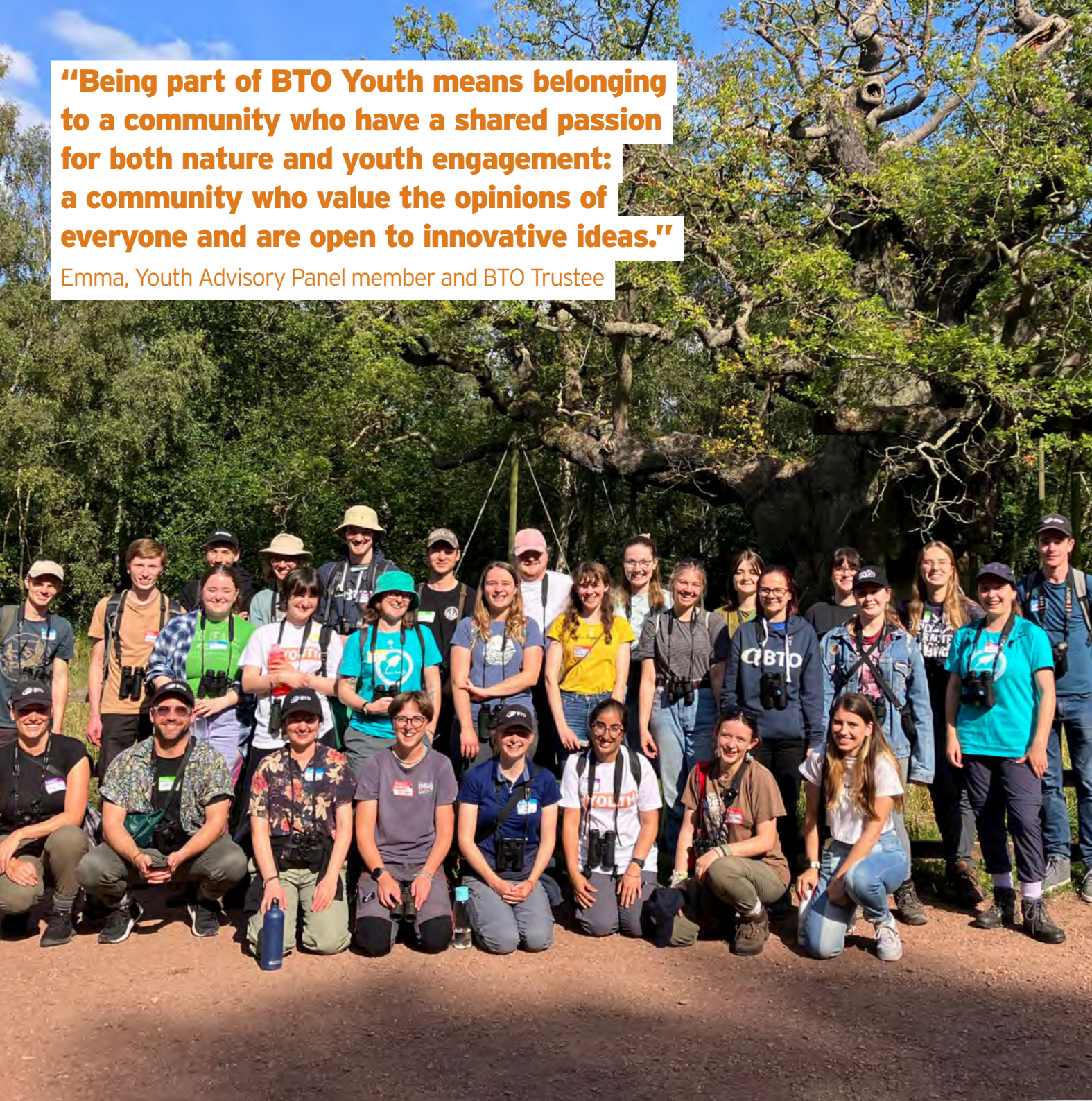
**"Knowing that together we can create a safer environment for other budding birders and wildlife enthusiasts is what motivates me."**





**"Being part of BTO Youth means belonging to a community who have a shared passion for both nature and youth engagement: a community who value the opinions of everyone and are open to innovative ideas."**

Emma, Youth Advisory Panel member and BTO Trustee



## How can you apply?

To apply, record a video of yourself answering the questions below. You can be as creative as you like in this video; it's not an interview, so it can be relaxed or fun! The deadline for applications is **11.59pm on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2024**. The questions we would like you to answer are:

► **What are you hoping to learn by being on YAP?**

► **Tell us about something you've done that you're really proud of, and how you made that happen.**

For example, a school project, a piece of creative work, helping a friend, or organising an event.

► **Looking at our values, is there one that is important to you? If so, why?**

► **Tell us about your favourite thing about nature; this can be a plant, animal, place, etc.**

This question is not scored; it is just to get an idea of how you connect with nature.

If filming a video is a barrier to you, you can submit written responses to these questions instead. You can send in your application by filling in the [online application form](#) and by emailing your video to [youth@bto.org](mailto:youth@bto.org).

We'll let you know within a week of the deadline whether you've made it through to the next round, which will be a short (no more than 20 minutes) chat with someone from our staff team, and one or two people from the current Youth Advisory Panel. We expect those interviews to take place in the week of **11 March 2024**.





# Who are we?

## BTO Youth staff team



**Faye Vogely** (she/her)  
Youth Engagement  
Manager



**Chris Marais** (he/him)  
Youth Engagement  
Coordinator



**Rachael Griffiths** (she/her)  
Youth Engagement  
Officer

## Youth Advisory Panel



**Adam** (he/him)  
17, Kent



**Alicia** (she/her)  
24, Bristol / North  
Yorkshire



**Emma** (she/her)  
22, Surrey / Oxford



**Esther** (she/her)  
17, Gloucestershire



**George** (he/him)  
21, Somerset / Oxford



**Katie** (she/her)  
20, Lothian



**Matt** (he/him)  
24, Essex / Norfolk



**Megan** (she/her)  
20, Buckinghamshire /  
Bristol



**Rosie** (she/her)  
18, Isle of Wight



**Samuel** (he/him)  
23, London / Dorset

## Inclusivity statement

To ensure we give an opportunity to those least represented on the panel at the moment, we will guarantee an interview to anyone who identifies as being from an underrepresented background (e.g. those from a visible minority ethnic group, those with a disability, those without formal school qualifications, or those from the LGBTQIA+ community; this is not a complete list so it is your choice whether fill in that you are part of an under-represented group). This is as long as you meet the basic requirements for joining YAP.

**"I loved being able to talk about birds with other people my age that actually care and now I have the opportunity to go to Bird Camp!"**

Birding 101 participant







**Image credits**

Faye Vogely, Alicia Hayden, Children Nature Network

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