

NYC Audubon and Sadhana Partnership Description
February 4th, 2021

Every September, New York City Audubon joins [Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus](#) in a beach cleanup at the National Park Service's Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge's North Channel Bridge Beach in celebration of the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup Day. Sadhana's organizers work with the local Hindu community to highlight issues surrounding the impact of certain ritual prayer practices on Jamaica Bay and organize monthly cleanups at the beach. For their September cleanup, NYC Audubon brings in volunteers to work alongside Sadhana. Much of what needs to be collected falls outside of typical beach debris like cigarette butts and fishing line. Volunteers regularly find devotional items like statues of deities (*murthis*) and oil lamps (*diyas*) which are used in the practice of Ganga puja (worship to the waters). During the cleanup Sadhana educates New York City Audubon's volunteers about these items and practices and the importance of removing the religious offerings in a respectful manner.

Sadhana has found many ways to repurpose such objects, including an exhibit of found items at the [Queens Museum](#). In return, New York City Audubon is given the chance to reach a wider audience, spreading awareness to Sadhana's volunteers of the importance of Jamaica Bay as bird habitat, particularly for nesting shorebirds like the American Oystercatcher. At the end of the cleanup, everyone gathers together to share lunch, which features delicious dishes provided by Sadhana's members. These UBT city partners are grateful for the opportunity to reach a wider audience to share and learn each other's stories--- about the cultural rituals of Hindu neighbors who call NYC home and the amazing birds that call Jamaica Bay home.







