

# Pat Paul

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I am a portrait and nature photographer. Combining the photography with gardening has led me naturally to observing birds in their environment. As a Master Gardener I have become concerned over the years of the need to restore native plants to our environment. In 2021 I became an Environmental Steward through Rutgers University. We can all change our perspectives on nature. Pollinators are all around us, but they won't be here much longer without our acknowledgement of and response to their influence on our lives. Our very survival as the human species is dependent on their survival.



The Winterberry Shrub, 16 x 20 in., Composite artwork, 2024

Migratory birds are in trouble. We have 3 billion fewer birds in North America than we did in 1970: nearly 30 percent fewer birds. A huge factor is habitat degradation and loss. We must all replace our cultivated plants with native plants to save the birds.

The Winterberry Holly shrub (*Ilex verticillata*) is a deciduous holly native to eastern and central United States. It will produce berries that can last all winter. "The Winterberry Shrub" is a composite artwork including just eight of the more than 40 species of birds that feed from the berries on this plant.