

## Story Behind the Shot

by Sandra Rothenberg

Since I was a child, Baltimore Orioles have nested on our property. I have always loved watching the females: aerial acrobats that collect dried grasses and long gossamer strands of horsehair from my sister's adjacent farm. The birds use the materials to build their pendulous, pear-shaped nests. What miraculous feats of avian engineering! Once they arrive in May after their long migration north, I use a tiny blind to observe the birds without disturbing them. This female barely landed to grasp a tangled clump of horsehair and natural hemp and sisal fibers caught on a branch. She was surrounded by a lacy, fluttering, diaphanous veil. Off she flew into the woods with her prize trapped in her slender bill.

Here is a link to all of the 2023 Audubon Photography winners: [The 2023 Audubon Photography Awards: Winners and Honorable Mentions | Audubon](#)