

Shaping Public Policy

This year's challenging political landscape called for a strategy that married Audubon's national advocacy work and science-based policy approach to our grassroots network. Together, we forged solutions that balanced wildlife and energy needs, secured funding for critical conservation work, and gave birds and other wildlife a voice on national, state, and community levels across the country.

Energy and Climate

THE CLEAN AIR ACT celebrated its fortieth birthday in September, demonstrating a legacy of cleaner air and healthier families. But that does not mean this landmark environmental law is safe from political attack. Audubon joined other environmental organizations this year in a successful fight to defeat proposed Senate legislation that would have eliminated the EPA's authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. Thousands of emails and phone calls from our citizen activists, Chapter members, and coalition partners in more than a dozen key states helped stop this assault in its tracks.

Energy development is one of the most pressing issues for wildlife. Even much-needed green wind energy—if not appropriately sited—can pose challenges for birds and other wildlife. Fortunately, the commonsense solution advanced by **Audubon Wyoming** and other western stakeholders made headway this year, when the Bureau of Land Management rolled out Audubon-developed maps of Greater Sage-grouse habitat. This resource will guide energy developers to areas less vital to wildlife—and provide a model for wildlife-friendly energy in other states as well. In addition, Audubon staff have worked tirelessly for three years to advance federal guidelines to reduce the impact of wind development on birds, bats, and other wildlife. Next year, their unflagging effort will pay off when these important guidelines are finalized.

BIRD CONSERVATION

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act provides funding for critical conservation efforts to support birds throughout the Western Hemisphere. It has been enormously successful, protecting more than 3 million acres of habitat that is home to both well-known birds, such as the Mourning Dove, and endangered birds, such as the Red Knot and the Piping Plover. Audubon is leading the effort in Congress to dramatically increase funding for this critical conservation law that helps protect Important Bird Areas from Canada to the Caribbean.

GULF RESTORATION

Audubon's science and policy staff teamed up to advocate for essential funding to mitigate the effects of the BP oil disaster, and to address the even larger chal-

lenges of comprehensive coastal restoration. Audubon made key advances on two fronts. The first was the inclusion of \$19 million in the Senate appropriations bill to begin construction of a large-scale sediment diversion to restore wetlands. The second was

a provision in the House-passed oil-spill legislation that directed \$1.2 billion to ecosystem restoration of the Gulf Coast. Audubon continues to advocate aggressively for the federal funding necessary to restore coastal Louisiana and the Gulf Coast environment.

CONSERVATION IMPACT

- ▶ Played a key role in securing passage of the House of Representatives' amendment directing \$1.2 billion in expected Clean Water Act penalties from the BP oil spill to Gulf restoration
- ▶ Spurred the Natural Resources Conservation Service to create a place-based initiative that dedicates \$320 million over four years to Mississippi River restoration
- ▶ Led the effort in Congress to reauthorize the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act at triple the current funding level, potentially generating as much as \$100 million each year to advance hemispheric bird conservation
- ▶ Successfully championed significant protections for 15 million acres of Greater Sage-grouse core habitat in Wyoming and across the interior West

Brian Rutledge
VP, Rocky Mountain
Region/Executive Director,
Audubon Wyoming

"The Greater Sage-Grouse is not all that's at stake when it comes to energy planning in the West. The sage landscape is a vital part of our natural heritage. Its wide-open skies draw trout anglers and city dudes to journey in the footsteps of cowboys and explore the ancient ways of Native Americans—and invite us all to dream big. That's what makes our work with the Bureau of Land Management such an important victory. By steering energy development toward areas less critical to sage-grouse, we can safeguard an ecosystem and a natural legacy—and still support our nation's need for energy, especially green energy."

Brian Rutledge at a well-sited (outside of prime sage-grouse habitat) wind farm west of Laramie, Wyoming.

