AUDUBON
STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015
A Roadmap for Hemispheric Conservation
ON THE COVER: Each spring and fall, billions of migratory birds follow the flyways of the Americas from wintering to breeding grounds and back again. By protecting the web of life that represents the Americas’ richest veins of biodiversity, Audubon is safeguarding our great natural heritage for future generations, preserving our shared quality of life, and fostering a healthier environment for us all.

- U.S. Important Bird Areas
- International Important Bird Areas

Shore Birds  Sea Birds  Land Birds  Raptors  Waterfowl

On the cover:

The lasting pleasures of contact with the natural world are not reserved for scientists but are available to anyone who will place himself under the influence of earth, sea, and sky and their amazing life.

—Rachel Carson

2012 marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of Silent Spring

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Prothonotary Warbler
Introduction

For more than a century, Audubon has protected birds and their habitat for the benefit of humanity as well as the earth's biodiversity. Our legacy is built on science, education, advocacy, and on-the-ground conservation. We bring all of this together through our unparalleled network. This combination of expertise and on-the-ground engagement makes Audubon a truly unique and trusted force for conservation.

Audubon's mission is more urgent today than ever before. Natural habitat and open spaces are disappearing at an alarming rate. Protections for wildlife, natural places, and clean air and water are in jeopardy. By protecting birds, we’re also safeguarding America’s great natural heritage for future generations, preserving our shared quality of life and fostering a healthier environment for us all.

The Case for Change

In order to meet today’s unprecedented environmental challenges, Audubon has brought new focus and discipline to this strategic plan. It is the first original, conservation-focused strategic plan for Audubon in more than 20 years, and it reflects the contributions of 150 members of the Audubon family, representing staff, board members, Chapters, and other partners.

The planning team began by following the Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways to identify bird species with the greatest conservation need. Next we defined the most pervasive and shared threats to these priority birds and their habitats. And then we looked at the cross-flyway strategies and specific projects with the greatest potential to deliver conservation impact. Only strategies that met the following standards were ultimately included in our strategic plan.

- Can we achieve impact at range-wide scale across the hemisphere?
- Can we add significant value?
- Do we have the specific skills and resources?

How We Selected Our Priority Species

Audubon’s priority bird species are birds of significant conservation need, for which our actions, over time, can lead to measurable improvements in status. Eighteen are Red WatchList species, 23 are Yellow WatchList species, and 8 are Vulnerable Common Birds. The breadth of this list reflects the dramatic loss of habitat and the pervasive threats that confront birds and wildlife.

Metrics for Success

We will measure our success through improved conservation outcomes for each of our priority species. These outcomes will be population increases, reversals or decreases in decline, improvement or expansion of essential habitats, and/or abated threats to populations or habitats.
Conservation Strategies
Audubon will maximize its conservation results by focusing on five conservation strategies critical for birds.

PUTTING WORKING LANDS TO WORK FOR BIRDS & PEOPLE

Best management practices on ranches, farms, and forests hold the key to survival for more than 150 species of threatened grassland and forest birds. By partnering with landowners, Audubon can help ensure a bright future for birds like the Cerulean Warbler and the Tricolored Blackbird, and a healthy landscape for future generations.

SHARING OUR SEAS & SHORES

Coastal areas are a magnet for birds and people alike. Unchecked coastal development, overfishing and pollution from oil and other causes. Audubon can advance policies and practices that will reduce threats such as oil spills and pollution from oil and other causes.

SAVING IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

Knowing which places are most important for birds is the first step toward conserving them. Audubon has identified 2,544 Important Bird Areas in the United States, covering 378 million acres, and is supporting work in some of the 2,345 IBAs in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada. Now we can harness the Audubon network to protect, restore, and advocate for these landscapes and the birds that depend on them.

SHAPING A HEALTHY CLIMATE & CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Climate change poses an unprecedented threat not just to birds but to biodiversity and our shared quality of life. Audubon is responding to this challenge with an equally unprecedented combination of strategies, from advancing transformational policies that reduce carbon emissions and support well-sited green energy to leading adaptive land management practices that will mitigate the impact of sea level rise and climate change.

CREATING BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Most Americans live in cities or suburbs, and people can play a critical role in forming healthy wildlife populations and communities. Rural regions have an outsized opportunity to contribute. As the leading voice for birds, Audubon can inspire the one in five adults who watch birds to make daily lifestyle choices that add up to real conservation impact.

HOW WE WORK: FOLLOWING THE FLYWAYS TO HEMISPHERIC CONSERVATION

The strategic plan.

Coastal Stewardship: Pacific
Saving Seabirds: Pacific
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Creating Bird-friendly Communities

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HOW WE WORK: FOLLOWING THE FLYWAYS TO HEMISPHERIC CONSERVATION

The strategic plan.
The Audubon Plan

By working as One Audubon along the flyways of the Americas, we will deliver conservation impact at scale.

The Audubon Network

Audubon’s national and state programs, Centers, Chapters, and Important Bird Areas come together with an unparalleled wingspan for conservation.

How We Work

Alignment: Follow the Flyways and Work as One Audubon

The flyways traversed by migratory birds each spring and fall inspire our new model for organizational alignment. By connecting the work of the Audubon network—Chapters, Centers, national and state staff, volunteers, partners, and other supporters—all along each of the flyways of the Americas, Audubon can weave a nationwide web of conservation for both migratory and non-migratory species. By working toward common flyway conservation goals, we can have greater impact. And by coordinating resources and expertise, we can increase our efficiency across the network.

State Programs

Audubon’s 22 state programs give us a presence at statehouses and provide statewide leadership for Chapters and Centers. The state programs are a powerful force for programmatic alignment throughout the flyways.

Centers

Forty-seven Audubon Centers introduce more than a million visitors each year to the natural world—and inspire them to help protect it.

Chapters

Audubon’s 467 chapters are more than our face in communities from coast to coast; they are the drivers of our on-the-ground conservation work. Many of the most important Audubon milestones took flight from the dedication and passion of our Chapter members. As full partners in our new strategic plan, Chapters can be an even more powerful force for conservation.

Hemispheric Partners

Audubon works directly with 19 birdlife partners in Latin America and the Caribbean to protect habitat along the length of the flyways.

Engagement: Increase Reach and Diversity

By engaging a broader and more diverse audience in our work, Audubon will meet the complex challenges facing birds. No other conservation organization has Audubon’s wingspan, from the grassroots to the grasstops.

As the leading brand in bird conservation, Audubon has the power to unite diverse stakeholders to solve the toughest problems, and the reach to motivate individuals and communities to take action for birds and the environment.

Nevertheless, like the environmental movement overall, we face a challenge: Our members and supporters do not fully reflect the nation’s changing demographics. Under our strategic plan, Audubon will engage a new generation of conservation leaders while maintaining our core loyal friends.
Putting Working Lands to Work for Birds & People

Working lands represent one of the best hopes for conservation. Ranches and farms cover more than one billion acres of the United States. Forests, many of which are managed for timber, account for an additional 747 million acres. These working lands add up to more than half of America’s acreage.

The Threat
Working lands are central to America’s economic and environmental health. They provide our food, shelter, and even homegrown energy. As our population grows, so does the number of acres devoted to agriculture. Many of the practices used in intensive farming jeopardize declining grassland birds. Forest birds, including the Wood Thrush, the Golden-winged Warbler, and many other neotropical migrants, are losing nesting habitat to agricultural development, especially in Latin America.

Audubon’s Solution
Partnering with landowners is the key to making working lands work for birds, people, and communities.

Forests
We help landowners balance forest management to create forests that work for breeding birds while providing a dependable stream of income from timber. Audubon educates foresters about the needs of birds, and shows them how to factor them into forestry plans.

Agricultural Lands
Years of scientific research have helped Audubon field staff share the ways farming can be compatible with birds. For example, farmers in California’s Central Valley, by keeping their rice fields wet a few weeks longer, provide habitat for Long-billed Curlews and other Pacific Flyway migrants. Measures to reduce runoff improve water quality; that, in turn, improves ecosystems in agricultural areas. Audubon can partner with small and large-scale farmers throughout the hemisphere to create healthy, safe habitat for shorebirds, waterfowl, and communities.

Grasslands and Ranchlands
The prairie and sagebrush habitats of the interior United States are threatened by energy development and other uses. Audubon works with all stakeholders to foster good policy and practices for managing these vital habitats.
Sharing Our Seas & Shores

Coastal areas have unique importance for many species of birds, offering breeding sites as well as rich sources of food for migratory stopovers. Oceans also support a large number of seafaring birds that depend on healthy waters for feeding and safe islands for nesting.

The Threat

Booming coastal development and recreational use of beaches are rapidly eroding vital habitat for birds and other wildlife. Overfishing threatens the food supply for birds—and, in the long term, for people, too. Sea level rise jeopardizes nesting habitat on beaches and islands at the same time that it puts coastal communities at risk. Beaches are critical nesting and migratory habitat for many species, including Piping Plovers, Snowy Plovers, Least Terns, and American Oystercatchers.

Audubon’s Solution

Audubon is committed to protecting the vital habitat along America’s coasts where people and birds intersect.

Shores

Audubon’s beach stewardship program enlists local communities to steer beachgoers away from the most important nesting sites. We also empower members and friends to become a strong voice for sound coastal management practices. By using sound science, including predictive modeling, we can begin to explore potential habitat impacts from sea level rise. This is a vital step toward developing strategies to mitigate and offset habitat loss for coastal birds.

Seas

Marine Important Bird Areas hold great promise for stabilizing declining populations of seabirds, including Ashy Storm-Petrels, Kittlitz’s Murrelets, and Roseate Terns. Expanding the IBA program to encompass and study vital ocean sites will provide a foundation for Audubon’s development and promotion of much-needed regulation of overfishing and other threats to ocean birds and wildlife.

Sundown Island, on the Texas coast. At least 18 species, including Brown Pelicans and Roseate Spoonbills, depend on the island, managed by Audubon.
Saving Important Bird Areas

Many of America’s most beloved and biologically rich landscapes are in grave danger. From the Arctic Slope in Alaska to the Mississippi Delta, and from the Northeast’s Long Island Sound to the wetlands of the Everglades, the power of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) cannot be overstated. Audubon is leading the way to protect these iconic places and the birds that depend on them, and mobilizing our network of Chapters to act as stewards.

The Threat

Birds depend on a diverse range of habitats, and the threats that confront them are equally varied. Grasslands are being replaced by residential development. Forests disappear through the overharvesting of timber. Badly planned energy development has grim consequences for many bird species and other wildlife.

Audubon’s Solution

As the U.S. partner for BirdLife International, Audubon spearheads an ambitious effort to identify, monitor, and protect the most important places for birds. We also collaborate with 19 international partners to extend a web of protection throughout the Western Hemisphere. To date Audubon has identified 2,544 IBAs covering 378 million acres of public and private lands in the United States. Among them are high-priority Global IBAs—places like New York City’s Jamaica Bay, areas within Alaska’s Arctic Slope, and coastal bird sanctuaries in Texas.

Each priority site requires a specific conservation plan—and that’s a critical piece of the work Audubon does. To implement these plans, Audubon will work with all key stakeholders—landowners, government agencies at every level, Chapters, and communities. A tiered program will guide the scope and level of involvement of the Audubon network, focusing on where conservation actions are possible and where protections can be secured, habitats restored, or threats reduced. This approach works: IBA status is now formally factored into state agency land-use planning in a number of states, including New York, Minnesota, and Washington. IBAs are also recognized by major utility grid planners and federal agencies. This pillar of Audubon’s overall approach to conservation is both powerful and simple: By identifying and protecting the most important places for birds, we can save species and preserve our natural heritage.
Shaping a Healthy Climate & Clean Energy Future

The effects of climate change are already being seen, and they pose profound challenges to conservation. How our nation and other nations respond to the unfolding impacts of temperature rise coupled with our boundless appetite for energy will shape the legacy we leave for future generations.

The Threat
This unprecedented threat is already disrupting the natural balance and cycles that have sustained birds and other wildlife for millennia. Its potential impacts loom, from habitat loss to devastating breaks in the delicate links that connect birds, migration, and food sources. Audubon’s research has already revealed a disturbing trend among wintering birds, many of which are shifting their ranges north in response to rising temperatures. While some lucky species will discover suitable habitat in their new location, others will find that the habitat and food sources they depend on have disappeared, leaving them no place to go.

Audubon’s Solution
Audubon is focused on four key strategies to reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change and foster a clean energy future.

Traditional Energy
The location of transmission lines and drill rigs matters to birds and other wildlife. Audubon will build on its leading-edge science, which has steered 15 million acres of western oil and gas wells and two new eastern transmission lines away from critical bird habitat.

Green Energy
Alternative sources, like wind and solar, will help meet growing demands for energy with less environmental impact. Audubon can ensure that we get green energy right, by locating wind farms in places with a substantial human footprint, where they will have less impact on birds and wildlife.

Emissions Reduction
Sound public policy is fundamental; that’s why we mobilize our network in the high-stakes fight on behalf of much-needed legislation to reduce emissions.

Adaptive Management
Innovative modeling using GPS information and data from our Christmas Bird Count along with other studies is already being used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify specific bird habitats and species most at risk from climate change. By understanding potential impacts before they occur, Audubon can provide proactive solutions.
Creating Bird-Friendly Communities

Most Americans make their homes in cities, suburbs, or towns. Fortunately for birds, these urban and suburban dwellers can play a critical role in fostering healthy wildlife and communities—and that’s good for kids, pets, and overall quality of life. Audubon also works with members of more rural communities to support conservation where they live.

The Threat
Residential development often alters and disturbs wildlife habitat. Meadows that once supported grassland birds become disconnected patches, while forests that provided nesting sites for other species disappear from the landscape. Not only are there fewer places to nest, feed, or rest, human presence and activity can degrade the habitat that remains and create hazards for birds. Collisions with buildings, ingestion of pesticides, competition with invasive nonnative species, and loss of food sources can make life precarious for the birds that most closely share our own habitat. Coupled with natural environmental threats, these manmade challenges contribute to declines among a broad range of both resident and migratory bird populations.

The Solution
People are at the heart of the conservation solution. From the removal of invasive plants to demonstration gardens and habitat restoration programs, Audubon Chapters, Centers, and state programs across the country work with communities to improve urban habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Programs like Audubon At Home, Urban Oasis, and Lights Out empower people to make bird-friendly lifestyle choices in their homes, backyards, and communities. Audubon Centers and Chapters provide the leadership and resources that can connect a neighborhood’s backyards in a swath of welcoming habitat for many birds, including swifts, swallows, thrushes, woodpeckers, wood warblers, and grosbeaks. Partnership efforts like Toyota and Audubon’s TogetherGreen enlist new conservationists to create bird-friendly communities coast to coast. By refining, expanding, and integrating these successful efforts, Audubon can have more direct impact on thousands of acres where birds and people live together.
Following the Flyways  Working as One Audubon along the Flyways of the Western Hemisphere, we will deliver conservation impact at scale.

by connecting the work of the Audubon network—Chapters, Centers, national and state staff, volunteers, international and other partners, and other supporters—all along each of the flyways of the Americas, Audubon can weave a seamless web of conservation, for our priority bird species and their habitats.

The following flyway sections include a description of priority and incubator projects within each flyway and highlights from Centers and Chapters.
Pacific Flyway
Conservation the Length of the Americas

The birds of the Pacific Flyway depend on a diverse chain of habitats, from Arctic tundra and northwestern rainforest to tropical beaches and mangroves. Audubon’s network of Chapters, volunteers, activists, and members is preserving and restoring these vital links along the way.

Each year at least a billion birds migrate along the Pacific Flyway, which stretches from the North Slope of Alaska to Central and South America. But these birds are only a fraction of those that used the flyway a century ago. Some species, such as the Black-footed Albatross and the Least Tern, are in serious trouble, and even many common birds, such as the Western Sandpiper, have become far less common. Habitat loss, water shortages due to diversion for agriculture and development, diminishing food sources, and climate change all threaten the birds of the Pacific Flyway.
Putting Working Lands to Work for Birds & People

Transforming the Central Valley

California’s central valley, one of this country’s most important food-producing areas, offers a good example of the power of Audubon’s partnerships. Audubon California, with its Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership, is collaborating with The Nature Conservancy and PRBO Conservation Science to enlist California farmers who grow rice, alfalfa, and other crops to manage their farms in bird-friendly ways that benefit such priority species as the Long-billed Curlew and the Western Sandpiper.

Audubon and PRBO Conservation Science have guided major investments in public funds to make agricultural lands more bird-friendly. The Natural Resources Conservation Service, a unit of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has committed $2.68 million to a three-year pilot program for rice farmers interested in increasing their farms’ value to migratory birds. To date, 74 farms and more than 28,000 acres have been enrolled in the program. In 2012 the NRCS is committing similar funding to grow the program. In another example of how Audubon California is engaging the agricultural community, 20 alfalfa and other forage-crop farmers recently participated in a pair of Audubon workshops to identify bird-friendly practices on their farms. These methods will be tested over the next several years.

Theory of Victory: Audubon will support, guide, and replicate efforts by farmers and ranchers to modify land management practices on farmland to increase their value for birds and other wildlife.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 210,000 U.S. acres; improved outcomes for six priority bird species.
Coastal Stewardship: Pacific

well loved and heavily used, western beaches and rocky intertidal zones are also home to some of the most vulnerable Pacific Flyway species, including the Black Oystercatcher (below), Western Snowy Plover, and California Least Tern. As development pressure continues to grow, precious shore habitats are vital not only for conservation but also because they provide an opportunity to help people understand how their own actions can help birds and wildlife. Building on innovative and successful stewardship by Audubon California and coastal Chapters, our multi-pronged approach combines on-the-ground protection with successful outreach programs aimed at increasing numbers and diversity of breeding and wintering sites. In the process, we are also protecting numerous other migratory shorebirds that rely on shoreline areas during winter and migration.

Theory of Victory: Audubon will protect key coastal species throughout their lifetimes and migration cycles by restoring and conserving dynamic beach dune habitat for nesting birds, and by reducing disturbance and minimizing threats during migration and winter.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on hundreds of miles of shoreline, from Baja California to Alaska; improved outcomes for three priority species.

PUTTING WORKING LANDS TO WORK FOR BIRDS & PEOPLE

Tongass National Forest

Alaska’s Tongass National Forest, nearly 17 million acres, includes a significant portion of the world’s last remaining temperate rainforest. This spectacular region supports abundant wildlife, including such priority bird species as the Marbled Murrelet. Audubon's goal is to conserve intact, ecologically significant watersheds in the Tongass and support the transition of forest management from the harvest of old-growth trees to more diversified uses. Audubon Alaska’s collaborative approach is in full view here, and its network includes all key stakeholders: conservation groups, the timber industry, commercial fishing groups, tourism officials, Alaska’s Native people, southeastern Alaska communities, the U.S. Forest Service, and Alaska Fish and Game. In partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the state program has used input from dozens of scientists to take a watershed-based approach to conservation. Audubon has analyzed, mapped, and described the Tongass’s coastal forests to identify areas of greatest ecological value. This will help deflect a current threat from legislation, introduced in both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives, that would make a substantial portion of the last remaining very large tree old-growth forest vulnerable to timber cutting. Audubon’s approach protects biodiversity while supporting sustainable economic development.

Theory of Victory: Audubon will work to conserve intact, ecologically significant watersheds in the Tongass National Forest and to support transitioning forest management from the harvest of old-growth trees to a more diversified use of the forest, including managing the Tongass for salmon.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 1.8 million acres; improved outcomes for four priority bird species.
Saving Seabirds in California

California Audubon Chapters are playing a critical role in the creation of a network of state marine reserves under the Marine Life Protection Act that will safeguard species and habitats while at the same time accommodating the needs of fishing and recreation. For each of five distinct regions, scientists, conservationists, commercial fishing interests, and recreational users must negotiate the design of marine protected areas.

Leaders from the Marin Audubon Society, San Fernando Valley Audubon, and Mendocino Coast Audubon are each playing important roles advocating for seabird habitat protection. In representing Audubon in negotiations, members of these Chapters have contributed a great deal of time and local expertise to a process that will benefit marine birds in this critical stretch of the Pacific Flyway for decades.

SAVING IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

Arctic Slope

The coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), which serves as the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd, has long been a high-profile location in the debate over energy development versus wildlife conservation. To the west of the Arctic Refuge, however, is a less well known but even more biologically diverse area critical to birds and other wildlife: the 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPRA), the largest single tract of public land in the United States. The NPRA is home to two large caribou herds; exceptional densities of raptors; millions of migratory shorebirds; tens of thousands of molting geese; polar bears; and beluga whales, walruses, and other marine mammals.

In 1976 Congress directed the Interior Department to provide “maximum protection” for the area’s significant fish, wildlife, recreational, and other “surface values” in balance with oil production in the NPRA. To date the Bureau of Land Management (which manages the NPRA) has designated four regions as “special areas” for their exceptional biological values: Teshekpuk Lake (above), the Utukok Uplands, Kasegaluk Lagoon, and the Colville River. The BLM is currently preparing the first-ever comprehensive area-wide plan to systematically assess all of the reserve’s values. This planning process presents an unprecedented opportunity to fulfill the Congressional mandate to balance oil exploration with wildlife preservation by protecting the designated special areas as well as other areas of special ecological significance (e.g., Drase Inlet and Meade River, Pecd Bay, the Arctic Foothills and DeLong Mountains, and the Southern Ipiupuk River).

Audubon Alaska, in the effort to safeguard Important Bird Areas and other special places in balance with responsible energy development, is pursuing permanent wilderness designation for the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge as well as the protection of important ecological areas within the NPRA. To that end, Audubon Alaska has published a “Habitat Conservation Strategy” for the NPRA that identifies appropriate protections for these “special areas,” with particular emphasis on the Teshekpuk Lake area as a breeding, molting, and staging ground for a range of seabirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl.

Audubon believes sound policy can serve our energy needs without jeopardizing areas of critical importance to birds and other wildlife. This can mean limiting oil and gas drilling in sensitive or critical habitat areas (for example, goose molting, caribou calving) and carefully siting needed infrastructure with wildlife habitat requirements in mind.

Theory of Victory: Audubon will work to secure the permanent protection of both the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and a series of identified special areas within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (for example, Teshekpuk Lake).

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 10 million U.S. acres; improved outcomes for four priority bird species.
Saving Seabirds: Pacific

The stretch of land and sea from Barrow, on Alaska’s North Slope, to Baja California is home to more than 100 million seabirds that depend on a network of breeding and foraging sites up and down the Pacific Coast. Audubon has the right skills and assets—which includes science-based identification of Important Bird Areas (IBAs), national reach and international partnerships, and expertise in colony restoration and public policy—to take effective action to stabilize and increase populations of at-risk species. We are already working with partners in British Columbia and Mexico to designate 250 IBAs along the Pacific Coast.

Specific goals include conserving food sources for bird species through the passage of international treaties, such as the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels and other legal protections; pressing for the recognition of IBAs and marine IBAs by private and public organizations seeking to develop offshore and near-shore resources; and using the expertise developed during 38 years of successful seabird projects in Maine at additional important Pacific coastal sites to make them safe and suitable for use by seabird colonies.

Theory of Victory: Audubon will take a broad-ranging approach—working with partners, influencing legislation, making full use of our extensive scientific work—to maintain a healthy network of breeding and foraging sites for the millions of migratory seabirds that use the Pacific Flyway.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on marine IBAs; improved outcomes for nine priority bird species.

Site It Right

The science is clear: Climate change poses the greatest threat to wildlife and habitat in our lifetime. A key strategy for reducing the impacts of climate change is to shift how we generate energy from burning fossil fuels to cleaner technologies, including wind, solar, and geothermal. Audubon supports properly sited renewable energy projects that avoid, minimize, and mitigate impact on wildlife and habitat. Site It Right advocates for national, state, and local policies that encourage the permitting of renewable energy projects while protecting the conservation values of our natural environment and wildlife on public and private lands.

The Pacific Flyway states possess vast renewable energy resources, growing populations, and world leadership in climate change policy, making this one of the world’s fastest-growing renewable energy markets and putting pressure on this key landscape. In close partnership with Audubon Chapters, Site It Right advocacy efforts will protect Important Bird Areas as well as the migratory pathways that connect them.

Theory of Victory: America must simultaneously reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and protect birds. Audubon will continue to promote a balanced approach to this crucial issue by supporting wind energy installations that are sited to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on wildlife and habitat.
Central Flyway
Spanning Mountains, Plains, Deserts, and Coast

The Central Flyway extends from the grasslands of the Great Plains, the heartland’s wetlands and rivers, and the majestic Rocky Mountains to the western Gulf Coast. Many of its migratory bird species winter in Central and South America; some migrate across the Western Hemisphere as far north as the Arctic Circle and others south to Patagonia, in southern South America. To survive these arduous journeys, they rely on stopover habitat all along the flyway. The Central Flyway region is also renowned for its iconic western species, the Greater Sage-Grouse and the Lesser Prairie-Chicken, and their spectacular breeding displays.

Habitat loss and degradation threaten birds of the Central Flyway. Water diversions and development are taking a toll on riparian and wetland habitats that many birds, including the critically endangered Whooping Crane, rely on each spring. Energy exploration and extraction has fragmented sagebrush landscapes of the intermountain West, with grim consequences for sage-grouse and other dependent wildlife. Grassland birds and habitat are vanishing at an alarming rate as native prairie is erased by agricultural and urban development.
The Sagebrush Ecosystem

The unbroken sagebrush country that provides crucial habitat for the Greater and Gunnison Sage-Grouse is one of the most awe-inspiring landscapes of the Rocky Mountain West. The sage encompasses approximately 120 million acres and stretches from eastern Washington to central Wyoming and down to northern New Mexico and Arizona. It is home to a plethora of species, including 297 species of birds, 87 species of mammals, and 63 fish species.

This fertile but fragile landscape has been fragmented, degraded, and, in some areas, completely eliminated by many different human activities. By some accounts, the sagebrush steppe habitat has declined by 50 percent from its levels just a century ago.

Today the biggest threat to the sage ecosystem is energy development. That’s why the Audubon Rockies program, working with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), state governments, and other stakeholders, has spurred the adoption of a game-changing strategy that balances wildlife protection with our nation’s need for energy. This science-based approach identifies the best places for wind farms and limits the footprint of oil and gas extraction while protecting core habitat areas for sage-grouse. As a result, 15 million acres of sage-grouse habitat in Wyoming are now protected, and the BLM has expanded this approach into Nevada, Utah, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and the Dakotas. Audubon’s pioneering work in one flyway can lead to successes in others; this strategy also holds great promise farther south for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken and the shortgrass prairie.

Theory of Victory: By focusing on the threatened conservation status of three species (Greater Sage-Grouse, Gunnison Sage-Grouse, and Lesser Prairie-Chicken), Audubon will ensure a sustainable future for the sage and prairie ecosystems and their wildlife.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 57 million U.S. acres; improved outcomes for three priority bird species.
Migration Corridor

NORTH

Many of North America’s migratory birds, especially Whooping (below) and Sandhill Cranes and waterfowl like the Redhead, rely on the Central Flyway’s diverse marsh and wetland habitats for their spring and fall journeys. In the Dakotas, both on-the-ground conservation strategies and targeted energy-policy work have the potential to positively impact millions of acres. These vast agricultural lands have major implications for many grassland- and wetland-dependent birds. Working with government agencies and private landowners in the Prairie Pothole region, Audubon is promoting collaborative solutions to some of the region’s most critical issues facing birds. The upcoming Farm Bill is emerging as one of the most important pieces of legislation for bird conservation, and Audubon’s policy team and dedicated members are building support for measures that ensure continued on-the-ground restoration, now in jeopardy due to sun-setting federal incentives.

HEMISPHERIC CONNECTIONS

Mexico

Rampant deforestation threatens critical wintering and stopover habitat for millions of migratory birds, including many raptor species that each year pass through Veracruz, on Mexico’s Gulf Coast. Cattle ranching and agriculture have cleared more than 90 percent of central Veracruz’s natural vegetation, leaving little cover, food, or roosting sites for birds. Audubon’s International Alliances Program is working with Pronatura Veracruz to build local stewardship of this globally significant Important Bird Area. The program helps landowners develop plant nurseries, ecotourism businesses, and other sustainable livelihoods from the forests instead of cutting them down to clear farmland. More than 3,000 acres of remaining Veracruz forest has been officially protected.

THE CENTER NETWORK

Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center

Just outside of Lincoln, Nebraska, the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center stands among 800 acres of native tallgrass prairie. In addition to the prairie, its miles of walking trails introduce visitors to ponds and wetlands, wildflowers, a diverse assortment of birds and other wildlife, and historic wagon ruts left by 19th-century pioneers. Thanks to education and outreach that engages surrounding communities and adjacent landowners, Audubon is fostering stewardship, preservation, and restoration of one of the last remaining remnants of the native prairies that once blanketed the Midwest.
**The Birding for Everyone Trail** brings nature within reach of every member of the Grand Valley, Colorado, community, regardless of physical abilities. The Grand Valley Audubon Society designed the trail with help and support from a number of community partners—and with all the senses in mind. As a result, visually impaired visitors can explore without assistance, listening to descriptions of the area and its diverse birds—and recorded songs as well as actual ones like the Brewer’s Sparrow (below) and the Common Yellowthroat. It is a powerful example of how Audubon is making nature accessible to new audiences.

The migration corridor’s hourglass narrows to a “funnel” in Nebraska, at the Platte River, one of our nation’s most important spring migration staging areas for both Whooping and Sandhill Cranes (above). Audubon Nebraska and its partners, including Big Bend Audubon, have long been instrumental in restoring this key stopover site along the Central Flyway. Working with partners and volunteers, staff from Audubon’s Lillian Annette Rowe Sanctuary are restoring habitat and clearing nearly 14,000 acres of invasive phragmites, work that will open miles of the Platte River channel vital to nearly 80 percent of the population of Sandhill Cranes and important for other wildlife. In addition to hands-on work to maintain this important river channel, Audubon builds community and national support for its restoration through sustainable ecotourism. Each spring visitors from around the globe witness the amazing spectacle of the crane migration at the sanctuary’s Iain Nicolson Audubon Center. Emerging threats to the corridor include the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, and Audubon has mobilized its far-ranging network in opposition to the pipeline’s inherent dangers. The migration corridor also includes precious prairie grasslands, among them 800 acres of native tallgrass prairie at the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center near Lincoln, Nebraska. Audubon is also leveraging additional conservation through collaborative efforts with the Mississippi Flyway on the Prairie Bird Initiative, an effort to work at landscape-scale geographies with beef producers and public agencies.

**Theory of Victory:** Audubon will protect the array of priority habitats and birds that shape the Central Flyway through a multi-pronged approach that engages our network and our partners all along the way. Together they will shape sound energy policy and address other threats.

**Bottom Line:** Conservation impact on 1 million U.S. acres; improved outcomes for five priority bird species.
**Incubator Projects**

PUTTING WORKING LANDS TO WORK FOR BIRDS & PEOPLE

**Prairie Bird**

As farms and cities in the central United States flourished, prairie grasses disappeared. Tall-grass prairies are now among our most endangered habitats—only about 4 percent remains. Prairie birds have shown the most sustained population declines of any bird group in North America. Audubon is partnering with ranchers who own remaining grasslands to develop market-based management that benefits prairie birds while sustaining the livelihoods of the ranchers. A pilot effort starting in Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri will focus on such species as the Henslow’s Sparrow, Greater Prairie-Chicken, and Upland Sandpiper. Work to advance grassland-bird-friendly beef production in the Great Plains is modeled on early efforts in the Southern Cone Grasslands of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 20 million U.S. acres and 2.5 million acres in South America; improved outcomes for six priority bird species.

**Western Rivers**

The Rio Grande and Colorado Rivers provide life-sustaining waters from the Rocky Mountains to the Southwest’s arid deserts. Water management is one of the most significant challenges for western communities as well as for wildlife. With more water diverted for human use, vital riverside forests and wetlands or riparian habitats disappear—habitat critical for feeding and breeding. That’s why Audubon is working to identify, protect, and restore priority riparian Important Bird Areas throughout the Southwest. We are employing multiple strategies, including working with water resource agencies, cities, farmers, and ranchers to put water back in rivers, adopt bird-friendly agricultural practices, and optimize water management for the basin’s urban, agricultural, and ecological needs.

In Arizona, the Nina Pulliam Mason Rio Salado Audubon Center is engaging Phoenix residents in good water management practices. Audubon New Mexico and Southwestern New Mexico Audubon are also partnering to protect the riparian corridor of the Gila River, now threatened by even more water diversions.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 536,000 U.S. acres; improved outcomes for 12 priority bird species.
Mississippi Flyway
Tracing North America’s Great Rivers and Crossing the Gulf

Nearly half of North America’s bird species, and about 40 percent of its waterfowl, spend at least part of their lives in the Mississippi Flyway. Extending north to Canada’s tundra and boreal forest, this much-traveled flyway includes the vast Mackenzie River watershed and then traces the mighty Mississippi River through America’s heartland to the Gulf Coast and continues south as far as Patagonia.

The Mississippi River and its vibrant grasslands, forests, and wetlands have been compromised by a century of misguided management. All along its length, the river has been controlled and manipulated to the detriment of natural systems and the birds and other wildlife that depend on them. The upper river is governed by a series of dams and locks; the lower river is channeled by more than 1,600 miles of levees. Together these structures confine the Mississippi to less than 10 percent of its original floodplain, and the sediment that historically fed the river’s vast delta in Louisiana no longer reaches marshes and coastal forests. As a result, 19 square miles of delta wetlands disappear each year.
Coastal Stewardship: Gulf

All along the Gulf Coast, Audubon works with volunteers and partner organizations to conserve, restore, protect, and monitor a network of coastal sites for colonial and beach-nesting birds—including Wilson’s Plovers, Black Skimmers, and Reddish Egrets—and to help people and birds coexist and thrive in these sensitive coastal areas. In some places, Audubon Chapter members and other volunteers adopt beaches, educating beachgoers about the birds and how to keep them, their eggs, and their chicks safe. At other sites, professional stewards protect the critical island breeding habitat of colonial waterbirds.

In a good example of Audubon’s citizen science approach, Audubon biologists also mobilize networks of volunteers to gather a wealth of data about coastal waterbirds and their habitats through the Audubon Coastal Bird Survey and other research efforts. Our scientists are building a credible, long-term inventory of information on coastal waterbirds and their habitats in order to help keep these birds’ populations resilient to sea level rise and human development pressures. Audubon will continue to augment these research and protection efforts by engaging local communities and the public at large through innovative outreach and social marketing in our efforts to reduce human disturbance, increase awareness, and broaden public protections for birds that breed, winter, and migrate along the Gulf Coast.

Theory of Victory: Audubon will develop comprehensive partnership programs to actively monitor, manage, and recover key colonies and nesting sites for beach-dependent Gulf Coast birds.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 30,000 U.S. acres; improved outcomes for 11 priority bird species.
After the BP oil spill, the fragile ecosystem of the Mississippi River Delta entered public view. Audubon brought all its resources to bear to help rescue the birds victimized by the disaster and to support recovery efforts. More than 35,000 people contacted us to volunteer, and we put 2,500 to work helping oil-soaked pelicans and other birds and wildlife.

In the spill’s aftermath, Audubon’s policy team and grassroots activists were instrumental in gaining national support for ongoing recovery work in the delta. This led to the introduction of federal legislation that, if passed, will direct billions of dollars to restoration.

In fact, Audubon had been leading the fight to protect and restore the delta for many years before the spill, through an array of innovative efforts, both science-based and legislative. The goal is to restore this vital and unique ecosystem and reestablish the natural, life-giving cycles of the Mississippi River, from its headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico.

Audubon’s oldest and largest preserve, Louisiana’s Paul J. Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary, has been conserved since 1924. Audubon staff made the sanctuary into the centerpiece of a unique and powerful conservation alliance with neighboring landowners. The alliance supports more than 170,000 contiguous acres of coastal wetlands and is pioneering new restoration strategies, including development of a new type of dredge to rebuild damaged wetlands.

The effort expanded with a pace-setting gift from the Walton Family Foundation, which allowed Audubon to bring its unique capacities to bear on the entire coast in partnership with the Environmental Defense Fund and the National Wildlife Federation. Now, from the mouth of the river to the halls of Congress, Audubon and its partners are forging and implementing a new vision for the nation’s relationship with the Mississippi River and its delta.

Theory of Victory: Audubon will advance groundbreaking science, engage more supporters, and pass key state and federal legislation to change Mississippi River management to restore the delta and coast for people and birds, and improve the health of the Gulf of Mexico.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 3.5 million U.S. acres; improved outcomes for 11 priority bird species.
Mississippi Flyway Action Network

Chapter leaders and Audubon activists from up and down the Mississippi Flyway are banding together to form the Mississippi Flyway Action Network. These leaders are transforming Audubon’s approach to grassroots public policy advocacy. By focusing their efforts on specific, high-impact advocacy activities, they will become the public faces and voices on behalf of birds and bird habitats in public meetings, in the media, and in the offices of their elected officials. They will coordinate, mobilize, and recruit activists in their regions, and they will represent Audubon to other organizations and community groups. They will lead the way in increasing the power of the Audubon network to effect public policy change.

Lights Out Chicago and Minneapolis

Migrating birds face a wide range of manmade threats. One of the most deadly is collisions with tall buildings, which cause millions of fatalities each spring and fall. Audubon and its Chapters are making midwestern cities safer by enlisting building owners to make their nighttime skies bird-friendly by turning unnecessary lights off during migration. In Chicago alone, where the first Lights Out program originated, researchers estimate that the initiative saves the lives of more than 10,000 migratory land birds each year. Audubon and the Chicago Audubon Society collaborate with the City of Chicago, the Building Owners and Managers Association of Chicago, and the Field Museum in this community effort.

Farther up the Mississippi, Audubon Minnesota has joined forces with community organizations, Audubon Chapters, government agencies, and other conservationists in Lights Out Twin Cities, helping to provide safe passage for migrants like the Cerulean Warbler (below).

Theory of Victory: By expanding Lights Out programs to more cities within the Mississippi Flyway and beyond, Audubon can engage people and communities to protect growing numbers of migratory birds. It is one element of our work to create bird-friendly communities.

Incubator Project

Putting Working Lands to Work for Birds & People

Bottomland Forests

Much of this flyway’s forested lands are privately owned and managed for forest products and recreational use, including hunting. Audubon is partnering with landowners to promote bird-friendly forest management that sustains viable populations of bottomland hardwood-dependent birds (breeding and migration), including Prothonotary, Swainson’s, and Cerulean Warblers.

Audubon Mississippi has completed a pilot project on 12,000 private acres in the western part of the state. Audubon Minnesota has launched a pilot to promote best management practices to private landowners in floodplain forests in and adjacent to the Important Bird Areas along the Upper Mississippi. As word has spread about Audubon’s collaborative approach, we have been asked to develop a landowner learning network.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 4 million U.S. acres; improved outcomes for four priority bird species.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Less than a 10-minute walk from downtown Columbus, Ohio, on a half-forgotten bend in the Scioto River and set amid an industrial landscape, lies a hidden haven for wildlife and birds: the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, which brings hands-on conservation and nature-based learning to its urban community. Conservation action infuses activities and educational adventures, and the Center’s location in an Important Bird Area gives students and others a vantage point to observe thousands of migrating birds as they stop along the Scioto River to rest and refuel during their long journeys. The story of the Mississippi Flyway and the Mississippi River watershed is a tale of hemispheric connections, and Center visitors learn where they fit in the story and how they can make a difference through their own actions.

Audubon Strategic Plan

Creating Bird-Friendly Communities

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The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 4 million U.S. acres; improved outcomes for four priority bird species.
Atlantic Flyway
On the Wing From Labrador to Tierra del Fuego

The Atlantic Flyway encompasses some of the hemisphere’s most productive ecosystems, including forests, beaches, and coastal wetlands. From the northern Atlantic Coast and through the Caribbean to South America, Audubon is working to support this avian superhighway’s 500-plus bird species and millions of individual birds.

Forty percent of the Atlantic Flyway’s bird species are species of conservation need. These include the Wood Thrush, the most widespread of our eastern forest neotropical migratory species, whose population has been reduced by half in the past 40 years. With only one-tenth of the U.S. landmass, this flyway is home to one-third of the nation’s people. And dense population carries with it many challenges for birds and habitat: development and sprawl, incompatible agriculture, overfishing, and climate change.

PRIORITY SPECIES
American Oystercatcher
American Woodcock
Arctic Tern
Bald Eagle
Black Skimmer
Black-capped Petrel
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Brown Pelican
Canada Warbler
Cerulean Warbler
Common Tern
Golden-winged Warbler
Grasshopper Sparrow
Least Tern
Piping Plover (right)
Prothonotary Warbler
Red Knot
Reddish Egret
Roseate Spoonbill
Roseate Tern
Ruddy Turnstone
Saltmarsh Sparrow
Sanderling
Seaside Sparrow
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Snail Kite
Snowy Plover
Swallow-tailed Kite
Western Sandpiper
Wilson’s Plover
Wood Stork
Wood Thrush

CONSERVATION GOALS
43.8 million acres
32 priority bird species
Eastern Forests

Audubon enlists landowners and foresters to help support birds that depend on forested landscapes along the Atlantic Flyway, training them in bird-friendly forestry practices and promoting legislation that provides incentives for forest preservation. This innovative program, pioneered by Audubon Vermont, has trained 80 percent of that state’s foresters. In 2011 the program’s guidelines were adopted by the state as an official reference for management plans used by landowners in a tax incentive program for those who commit to keep their land—more than one million acres to date—in forest.

Audubon New York has trained Adirondack landowners and foresters responsible for managing nearly 700,000 acres. In partnership with the Belize Audubon Society, Audubon is also working to protect forested winter habitat for the Wood Thrush and other neotropical migrants. Audubon will expand both the reach and scope of this pragmatic approach to conservation, including promoting policies that offer economic incentives for forest preservation in both Latin America and the United States.

Theory of Victory: Audubon can support viable populations of seven priority bird species throughout their lifecycles by establishing a protected and properly managed network of forested landscapes all along the Atlantic Flyway.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 35 million acres in the United States and 140,000 acres in Belize; improved outcomes for seven priority bird species.
Coastal Stewardship: Atlantic

The beaches and saltmarshes of the Atlantic Coast of the United States are of vital importance to a wide range of birds. Coastal habitats are especially vulnerable to development in this heavily populated part of the country. Global warming and sea level rise are other looming threats to coastal habitat. Audubon's successful beach stewardship programs, which enlist Chapters, members, and local volunteers to help protect beach-nesting sites, provide a powerful and practical solution. By engaging more communities up and down the coast, we can create a web of protection. Already, beaches on New York's Long Island and North Carolina's Cape Hatteras are becoming safer for priority birds like the Piping Plover. Audubon currently has active stewardship programs at 61 sites in the Atlantic Flyway.

Theory of Victory: Audubon can restore populations of eight priority species through stewardship, habitat maintenance, and threat abatement at key breeding, migration, and non-breeding coastal sites used throughout the annual cycle across the flyway.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 57,000 U.S. acres and 43,000 acres in the Bahamas; improved outcomes for 12 priority bird species.
SAVING IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

Everglades Ecosystem

As the only conservation organization working throughout the ecosystem, Audubon's goal for the Everglades is to reestablish colonies of wading birds that have been displaced by drainage, development, and dirty water. Science, grassroots reach, sophisticated policy work, and partnerships with landowners, businesses, and other stakeholders all drive our success. Important Bird Areas are central to this effort. One of the first victories in our new Atlantic Flyway IBA strategy was the formation of the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area. This new, 150,000-acre refuge supports priority birds like Grasshopper Sparrows and many migratory birds. Focusing on getting the right amounts of freshwater flowing into the remnants of the Everglades, Audubon has shaped federal and state policies and secured funding for projects that store, treat, and deliver clean water to the natural system. Audubon Florida and the state’s 44 Chapters collaborate with other partners and local, state, and federal decision makers to marshal much-needed support for the ambitious Everglades restoration project, the nation’s largest ecosystem project. Among recent successes are measures to reduce pollution in Lake Okeechobee, improve freshwater flow to Everglades National Park, and restore 20 miles of the Kissimmee River.

**Theory of Victory:** Audubon will harness its full network to restore natural hydrological processes, reduce pollution, and advance sound land management practices that support the health of the full Everglades system.

**The Bottom Line:** Conservation impact on 7.7 million acres; improved outcomes for six priority bird species.

SAVING IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

Long Island Sound

Roughly 20 percent of Americans live within 50 miles of Long Island Sound. Audubon is leading an ambitious effort to restore the Sound’s health in a way that supports populations of priority waterbirds and shorebirds while balancing the needs of nature and people. Our national policy team joined forces with Audubon Connecticut and Audubon New York to rally federal, state, and local lawmakers and other stakeholders to endorse Sound Vision, a two-year action plan to protect and restore the Sound. The plan, developed by the Long Island Sound Citizens Advisory Committee, combines restoration projects with unified legislative efforts. Science plays a key role in Audubon’s efforts in the Sound, exemplified by Audubon Connecticut’s work to assess breeding success and identify optimal nesting locations that will ultimately benefit American Oystercatchers, Piping Plovers, Saltmarsh Sparrows, Roseate Terns, and other priority bird species.

**Theory of Victory:** Audubon will marshal its network to restore Long Island Sound as a healthy, functioning estuary that supports priority waterbirds and shorebirds in balance with human use and recreation. This includes a network of permanently protected and properly managed coastal and upland habitats that ensure adequate areas for breeding, migrating, and wintering birds, and also strong fisheries to provide food for birds.

**Bottom Line:** Conservation impact on 875,000 acres; improved outcomes for eight priority bird species.
In northern Florida, as the Atlantic Flyway birds pass over the wet prairies, Audubon is working to protect high-quality existing marshes to bolster bird populations especially susceptible to sea level rise threatening coastal marshes in the Chesapeake Bay. Audubon's 205,891-acre Southern Dorchester County Important Bird Area is globally significant for Saltmarsh Sparrows and provides habitat for Seaside Sparrows. It is anchored by Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, several state wildlife management areas, and private landholdings, including the Chesapeake Audubon Society's 750-acre Farm Creek Marsh Sanctuary. Audubon will identify appropriate sites for protection and restoration to keep marsh migration corridors free of development, and will protect high-quality existing marshes to bolster bird populations especially susceptible to sea level rise. This project will also guide efforts at other Atlantic Flyway sites.

Theory of Victory: Audubon will manage and protect a network of saltmarsh landscapes across the Atlantic Flyway to sustain priority bird species in the face of sea level rise and other threats.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 5 million U.S. acres; improved outcomes for eight priority bird species.

**Saltmarsh**

Audubon Maryland-DC and its partners are working to help imperiled saltmarsh birds adapt to sea level rise threatening coastal marshes in the Chesapeake Bay. Audubon's 205,891-acre Southern Dorchester County Important Bird Area is globally significant for Saltmarsh Sparrows and provides habitat for Seaside Sparrows. It is anchored by Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, several state wildlife management areas, and private landholdings, including the Chesapeake Audubon Society's 750-acre Farm Creek Marsh Sanctuary. Audubon will identify appropriate sites for protection and restoration to keep marsh migration corridors free of development, and will protect high-quality existing marshes to bolster bird populations especially susceptible to sea level rise. This project will also guide efforts at other Atlantic Flyway sites.

Theory of Victory: Audubon will manage and protect a network of saltmarsh landscapes across the Atlantic Flyway to sustain priority bird species in the face of sea level rise and other threats.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 500,000 U.S. acres; improved outcomes for five priority bird species.

**Eastern Grasslands & Shrublands**

Atlantic Flyway birds that depend on grassland and early successional shrubland habitats have experienced significant population declines. The flyway provides essential habitat not only during the breeding season but as a migratory pathway and wintering area. Audubon and its partners will create a network of private and public grasslands and shrublands that supports viable populations of priority bird species throughout their lifecycles.

Theory of Victory: Audubon will develop, deploy, and implement proven management strategies such as modified haying practices, especially on private lands, to improve grassland and shrubland habitat for priority species throughout the Atlantic Flyway.

The Bottom Line: Conservation impact on 5 million U.S. acres; improved outcomes for eight priority bird species.
HOW WE WORK

The Audubon Network works from backyards to legislatures across the hemisphere. Through science, education, advocacy, and on-the-ground conservation, we protect birds and their habitat. Where birds thrive, people prosper.

Melanie Driscoll, Director of Bird Conservation for the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Flyway, was an unstoppable force for birds during the BP oil disaster, and she exemplifies Audubon’s leadership in long-term recovery for the region.
CITIZEN SCIENCE

More than a century ago, Audubon pioneered the idea of citizen science with the first Christmas Bird Count. Today the longest-running wildlife census in the world continues to shape and inform our approach to conservation, providing vital information about bird populations and trends, data that alerts us to environmental threats not only to birds but to the larger ecosystems we all depend on. As partners with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in ebird.org, Audubon has helped transform citizen science into an everyday activity for tens of thousands of birders. Their observations, reported online anytime and from anywhere throughout North America, provide an ongoing assessment of bird populations that is fast becoming an invaluable resource for conservation.

OPEN STANDARDS FOR THE PRACTICE OF CONSERVATION

New tools and resources are amplifying the impact and influence of Audubon’s scientific work and driving conservation impact. These include the adoption of an adaptive management tool, the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, for conservation planning and implementation. Using this results-driven methodology throughout the Audubon network will make us more agile and nimble, and support a continuous improvement model of assessment and refinement.

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

Science is the foundation of Audubon’s Important Bird Areas program. As partner of BirdLife International, we use science to identify, assess, and monitor the most essential habitat for birds. To date, 2,544 IBAs, covering 375,000 acres, have been identified in the United States. These sites help us focus our conservation efforts where they are most needed.

CLIMATE CHANGE

By increasing our use of GIS-based modeling, Audubon can provide clear pictures of changes in bird abundance and distributions through space and time. It enables us to predict the impacts of climate change on particular species or habitats—and design conservation approaches that will mitigate them.

Gary Langham, Audubon’s Chief Scientist, is pioneering the use of predictive modeling to anticipate the effects of climate change on habitat and to help birds adapt to those changes.
EDUCATION AND CENTERS

OUR EDUCATION LEGACY
A commitment to education is at the heart of the Audubon tradition. By inspiring more people in more places to value and protect the natural world, we are laying the foundation for future conservation. Audubon Centers are one of the principal elements of our education work. They have inspired more than 10 generations of Americans to learn about and protect birds, other wildlife, and the natural world. Our network of natural Centers now reaches more than a million visitors each year.

MOVING PEOPLE TO CONSERVATION ACTION
Under our new strategic plan, Audubon will strengthen and refine Audubon Center programming and activities with the goal of making visitors more active participants in our conservation work. This model for engaging people in conservation, based on five years of rigorous research in partnership with other major conservation organizations, breaks new ground with its focus on measurable conservation results. It is how we will transform Audubon Centers into more robust hubs for saving birds and protecting habitat and advancing the objectives of our priority projects in each flyway.

BUILDING DIVERSITY
Education also plays a pivotal role as Audubon engages new, more diverse audiences. It is why many of our most recently developed Centers are found in urban neighborhoods in such cities as Los Angeles, Phoenix, Columbus, Seattle, Dallas, and New York. Each Center is a vital community resource, with innovative programming that introduces people of all ages and backgrounds to nature and conservation. By aligning our programming with our conservation goals, we can build on this solid foundation to expand both reach and influence even further.

PROGRAMS WITH IMPACT
Programs like Audubon Adventures, which reaches more than 100,000 children a year, along with newer additions like Urban Oasis, which enlists urban communities to protect city parks that serve as rest stops for migrating birds, extend Audubon’s education impact beyond Centers. By recasting these successful programs to better support our conservation priorities, we will generate more conservation actions.

Audubon At Home
This popular program has already proven its power to mobilize people in urban, suburban, and rural areas to make environmentally friendly choices in their own backyards. The new strategic plan will further focus its activities on vulnerable and at-risk species in each flyway—enlisting a growing share of the 50 million birdwatchers across our nation to protect and enhance the habitat these vulnerable birds depend on. Audubon Chapters and Centers will expand workshops and demonstration sites, while our communications and outreach will provide new resources for homeowners, apartment/condo dwellers, and park stewards. Audubon’s strategic plan is just the catalyst needed to grow this already successful initiative.

Audubon educators like the Grange Insurance Audubon Center’s Tori Strickland in Columbus, Ohio, are inspiring a new generation of conservation leaders in communities coast to coast.
POlICY

EXPERTISE AND CREDIBILITY
Audubon is a respected and influential voice on public policy issues, from town halls to the U.S. Capitol. We have the power to convene diverse stakeholders to solve even the toughest problems—like energy planning. The balanced approach to energy exploration and extraction siting we spearheaded in sagebrush country has protected 15 million acres and is expanding to protect millions more. We used the same balanced approach to advance new federal guidelines for wind energy that will keep clean energy truly green by steering development away from critical habitat.

A NETWORK OF INFLUENTIALS AND ACTIVISTS
Audubon’s members are four times as likely to be opinion leaders, with interest and involvement in policy issues. Thousands take action as Audubon Activists. We mobilize this formidable force through communications outreach and Chapter-based grassroots training. It is how we bring the full power of Audubon to bear on behalf of legislation addressing issues such as bird conservation, ecosystem restoration, and clean air and water. And as we further align and strengthen our network, Audubon will become an even more powerful advocate for birds and the environment.

THE VOICE FOR BIRDS
From clean air and water to support for the nation’s iconic national parks and national wildlife refuges, many of the same issues that touch people also touch birds. In addition, protections for birds conferred by such milestone legislation as the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act and the Endangered Species Act have long-term implications for people along with more immediate impact on birds. By safeguarding our great natural heritage, we protect our nation’s distinctive ways of life, from the Mississippi Delta to the high plains of Wyoming. That’s why Audubon’s policy team works tirelessly on behalf of a healthy environment, rich in biodiversity. Now the sharper focus and clear goals in our strategic plan will amplify our voice for birds and people alike.
ENGAGEMENT

A POWERFUL BRAND
Audubon has been introducing birds, nature, and the importance of conservation to generations of Americans since Bird Lore, the precursor to Audubon magazine, published its first issue in 1899. As the leading brand in bird conservation, we are a well-known, trusted, and influential messenger on behalf of birds and the environment.

GROWING REACH AND DIVERSITY
Like the environmental movement overall, Audubon faces a challenge: Our members and supporters do not fully reflect the nation’s changing demographics. And there is proof in our network and all around us that our conservation and education efforts are more effective when we have a broader base of cultural knowledge and when we better reflect the groups we call our partners—whether they represent business, government, communities, members, or friends.

Our strategic plan recognizes that reaching a broader and more diverse audience is critical to building a more effective, transformational Audubon. It calls for a new, sophisticated approach to communication that reaches beyond the 1.8 million who read each issue of Audubon magazine, to embrace audiences more likely found on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms. Our new approach will provide opportunities for volunteers, friends, Center visitors, Chapter members, and other supporters to shape their own relationship with Audubon, even as we work to deepen their connection and commitment to our work.

This new donor- and audience-centric model for engagement will be as much a key to our success as our strategic conservation planning. By extending our brand through corporate partnerships, we will broaden both awareness and support. By expanding our membership model, we will attract new, more diverse audiences to our work. And by utilizing social media and other new communications platforms, we will engage a new generation of conservation leaders.

New communications tools are vital for introducing new audiences, including these students at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center outside San Francisco, to the wonder of birds and the importance of conservation.
TOGETHERGREEN

PUTTING WORKING LANDS TO WORK FOR BIRDS & PEOPLE

Audubon Rockies, the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are working together to help landowners foster bird habitat on their properties by providing them with technical assistance, conducting workshops on Farm Bill programs and management practices, and helping enroll landowners in Farm Bill conservation programs.

SHARING OUR SEAS & SHORES

Cornell University’s Robin Hadlock Seeley is using her fellowship to inspire shore-land owners, land trusts, and other citizens to make an investment in their local environment by working to conserve marine habitat vital to coastal birds in Maine.

SAVING IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

The Nevada Important Bird Areas program, along with the Yomba Shoshone Tribe, the Great Basin Bird Observatory, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, teamed up to launch the Sagebrush Celebration Project to conserve endangered wildlife populations dependent on sagebrush on the Yomba Shoshone reservation.

date, TogetherGreen has supported the creation of 1,550 partnerships.
TogetherGreen has also been one of most effective Audubon initiatives to strengthen our group identity as One Audubon with Chapters and across the network. And under our new plan, TogetherGreen will deliver even more engagement and conservation impact.

Four years of the TogetherGreen partnership have kick-started hundreds of successful projects—as well as impressive results—across all five Audubon conservation strategies. The following are only a few examples.

SHAPING A HEALTHY CLIMATE & CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

The Klamath Basin Audubon Society and its partners in the Klamath–Siskiyou Bioregion in Oregon are creating an affordable renewable heating energy program for rural residents, in which they restore forest habitat and convert the by-products into firewood for heating and cooking.

CREATING BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

The Milwaukee Audubon Society, along with other Wisconsin conservation groups, launched Bird City, modeled on the Tree City USA program. To date, 50 Wisconsin cities, villages, towns, and counties have received the Bird City designation for their highly public commitment to creating a better place for people, birds, and other wildlife.

TogetherGreen, a collaboration between Toyota and Audubon, has supported the creation of more than 1,000 partnerships.
Our Partners

No single organization can meet all the environmental challenges facing birds, habitat, and people. That’s why Audubon collaborates with partners throughout the United States and beyond to shape a healthy, vibrant future for all of us and the planet we share. The following are only some of the many international, national, state, and local nonprofit partners we worked with this year.

Alaska Wilderness League  
Alianza Para las Aras Silvestres  
American Bird Conservancy  
American Farmland Trust  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
BirdLife International and 19 partners  
Ammonia  
Aves & Conservacion  
Aves Argentinas  
Aves Uruguay  
Bahamas National Trust  
Belize Audubon Society  
Bird Studies Canada  
Centro Nacional de Areas Protegidas  
CODEFF  
Falklands Conservation  
Foundation for Nature Conservation in Suriname  
Grupo Jaragua  
Guyra Paraguay  
Nature Canada  
Panama Audubon Society  
Pronatura  
Salva Natura  
SAVE Brazil  
Sociedad Ornitológica Puertorriqueña, Inc.  
California Rice Commission  
Centro de Estudios y Conservación del Patrimonio Natural (CECPAN)  
Clean Water/Jobs Coalition  
Conservation Measures Partnership  
Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Ducks Unlimited  
Earth Justice  
EarthShare  
El Jaguar  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Fauna and Flora International  
Fundación Cocibolca  
Garden Club of America  
Gulf Renewal Project  

Island Conservation  
Land Trust Alliance  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
National Geographic  
National Wildlife Federation  
National Wildlife Refuge Association  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Oceana  
Ocean Conservancy  
Point Reyes Bird Observatory  
Rainey Conservation Alliance  
RARE  
Sierra Club  
Tejon Ranch Conservancy  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Wilderness Society  
Trout Unlimited  
Trust for Public Land  
Western Resources Advocates  
World Wildlife Fund

What We're Not Doing

Strategic thinking means making informed decisions about what we will not do as well as what we will do. We owe it to our funders and supporters, as well as to birds, to make sure we manage all of our resources for the highest conservation return. In that spirit of discipline and focus, here is some of what Audubon will no longer do.

We will stop investing in nonessential or unsustainable organizational administrative units and operations:

- We will consolidate Audubon Colorado and Audubon Wyoming into a more efficient Audubon Rockies Region program, with one board and one executive director.
- We will close The Mississippi River Institute, which is no longer core to our growing Mississippi Flyway program.
- We will consolidate the Missouri State program, relocating state-oriented activities into the Riverlands Center.

We will stop spending scarce dollars on headquarters overhead.

- We will reduce these costs through technology, by eliminating redundancies, and by outsourcing.

We will stop Education programs that do not serve our conservation agenda.

- We will discontinue prescribing Nature for Kids.
- We will discontinue the Youth Conservation Corps.
- We will discontinue camp scholarships.

We will stop small-scale federal invasive species policy work.

We will stop allocating substantial policy resources to general environmental policy at the expense of specific bird-related policy work.

We will stop conducting retrospective Christmas Bird Count analyses as the effort does not justify the outcomes.

We will stop pursuing funding that is not aligned with our priorities.

We will stop committing staff time or other resources to participation in non-strategic conservation initiatives.

We will stop investing in projects if they do not pass a basic “fitness” test, which includes:

- Relevance for our flyway-based conservation plan.
- Sufficient return on investment/financial sustainability.
- Critical support for our core engagement tactics.
WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Conservation Impact at Scale

**Conservation Results**
- 64 priority bird species saved
- 118 million acres conserved

**Working as “One Audubon”**
- Network-wide focus on critical conservation priorities
- Flyways framework and integration

**Broader Reach and Diversity**
- More members, supporters, and friends
- Support for strategic conservation and strategies

A Mobilized Network
The Audubon Mission
TO CONSERVE AND RESTORE
NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS,
FOCUSED ON BIRDS, OTHER
WILDLIFE, AND THEIR HABITATS
FOR THE BENEFIT OF HUMANITY
AND THE EARTH'S BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY.