ADVOCACY GUIDE FOR OHIO

How to use your voice to help birds in a changing climate
About the National Audubon Society

Audubon’s mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and our planet’s biological diversity. For more than a century, Audubon has built a legacy of conservation success by mobilizing the strength of its network of members, chapters, Audubon centers, state offices, and dedicated professional staff who connect people with nature and empower them to protect it. A potent combination of science, education, and policy expertise merges in efforts ranging from protection and restoration of local habitats to the implementation of policies that safeguard birds, other wildlife and the resources that sustain us all—in the U.S. and across the Americas.

About Audubon Great Lakes

Audubon Great Lakes inspires diverse audiences to conserve natural ecosystems and build healthy communities for people, birds, and other wildlife. Local chapters began in Illinois, and the regional office, Audubon Great Lakes, expanded to include Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Wisconsin. The central office resides in downtown Chicago. Today, Audubon Great Lakes informs National Audubon Society’s policy and science staff, and develops and manages our own conservation priorities in the Midwest. We work closely with our network of dozens of local Audubon chapters to conserve and restore natural ecosystems. We envision healthy coastlines, forests, farmlands, and wetlands for our bird and human communities—living landscapes to be enjoyed for generations to come.

let’s do this! “It’s time to give back to the birds you love.”
SECTION 1
Introduction

How To Use This Guide

The Audubon Advocacy Guide is a resource for helping you share your passion for birds and convey the need to protect them in a changing climate. As an Audubon advocate, you are joining a community working together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help support more resilient bird populations, making real and lasting change—for birds, for ourselves, and for future generations. These efforts can be local, right here in Ohio, or helping on a larger scale!

This project isn’t just about building a better world for birds; it’s about building a better world for us all. To do this, we need a diverse group of Audubon volunteers to create a groundswell of support for birds. This starts with conversations between you and your friends, family, colleagues, community, and even elected officials.

Whether you came to this project as a nature lover, concerned American, or someone who wants to leave a better world for your children and grandchildren, we have activities and actions that will inspire you to make a difference. Whatever actions you’re willing to take to protect the birds we all love, this guide is here to help.
What’s in This Guide

In this guide, you will find information on:

7 Audubon’s Climate Initiative
11 Birds impacted in Ohio
15 What you can do to protect birds
21 Building healthy, resilient bird populations and communities
27 How to communicate about birds and climate change
35 Taking the extra step to protect birds
41 Frequently asked questions

Why Audubon is Working on Climate Change

In 2014, we released the Birds and Climate Change Report to examine the impacts of climate change on birds. The severity of the threat—more than half of North American birds are at risk—convinced us that we have to act today to preserve and protect our beloved birds and their habitats. Most notably, we expect to see a change in their current habitat and therefore a change in their ranges—specifically, the report shows that climate change threatens birds by shifting or shrinking their ranges. Yet actions we take today can preserve and protect birds and their habitats.

It’s important to remember you don’t have to be an expert to be an advocate. Audubon’s team is available to answer the tough questions for you. As advocates, you are the voice of hope that will inspire other people to help birds survive our changing climate.
What You’ll Do as an Audubon Advocate

By being an advocate, you are joining thousands of Audubon members who are helping to drive real action to reduce the emissions causing global warming and protect the places birds need most. It is only through our large, collective voice that we can truly protect birds and solve the challenge of climate change.

We’ll ask you to help in three primary ways:

• **Be the messenger:** Many people are interested in birds. When you share your love of birds, whether through your online network or with friends and family you see every day, you’re sharing positive information and inspiring solutions that other people can use.

• **Be an advocate:** Take your conversations further. Become a resource for others by hosting presentations, talking to your elected officials, and encouraging your community to take actions to protect birds.

• **Be the solution:** Audubon works to protect birds where they live now and where they will be as their ranges shift. You can join in by encouraging people to create a bird-friendly backyard (and sharing it with others through photographs and social media), volunteering to do river restoration projects, or improving habitat at an Important Bird Area.

Online Resources

Audubon’s website has a wealth of digital tools and resources to support you as we work to grow this amazing community of people who care about our birds and environment.

For more information about birds and climate change, visit climate.audubon.org to learn which birds are threatened and how their ranges and habitats will be impacted.

For the latest news and updates on our climate programs, check out audubon.org/climate.

To connect with other Audubon advocates and find more in-depth information on actions you can take to protect birds, head to works.audubon.org.
SECTION 2

Birds and Climate Change

In 2014, Audubon released a groundbreaking study detailing the impacts of climate change on 588 North American birds. Audubon’s Birds and Climate Change Report is a comprehensive study that analyzes the shifts in birds’ ranges as temperatures rise. The report found that climate change is the greatest threat to our birds, and its effects are already happening—which increases the urgency of our efforts to reduce carbon pollution and protect the places that North American birds need to thrive.

Why are bird ranges so important? Every bird has a set of environmental conditions that enable it to thrive, and climate governs all of these conditions. If it is too hot, too cold, too dry, or too wet, birds cannot thrive. In the last 50 years, more than 60 percent of wintering North American bird species have shifted their winter range northward. Soon, they may have nowhere left to go.

Did you know that only nine species of birds have gone extinct in the past four centuries? Now, because of climate change, 314 are imperiled.
Although temperatures have ebbed and flowed historically, scientists agree that average global temperatures are rising—and at a rapid rate.

Research shows that even if we act swiftly to limit carbon pollution, temperatures will continue to rise between 2.7 and 8.6 degrees F through 2100. Those amounts might not seem drastic, but even small changes can have significant impacts on birds, who are finely attuned to a set of climatic conditions.

**Audubon’s research focuses on which birds are most sensitive to climate change and where those changes are most likely to occur. With that understanding, Audubon can target conservation efforts to ensure birds have the best chance at survival in the future.**

### By the Numbers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>588</td>
<td>North American bird species are included in the current study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>314</td>
<td>Species are predicted to lose more than 50 percent of their current climatic range by 2080.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>Climate-threatened birds (of the 314 species) face losing more than half of their current climatic range by 2080.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>Climate-endangered birds are projected to lose more than 50 percent of their current climatic range by 2050.</td>
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This report is only the first step in Audubon’s effort to protect birds and combat the effects of climate change. Audubon’s scientists are already incorporating additional data into generating more robust projections and providing a better understanding of the impact of global warming on birds.

This level of understanding would not have been possible without the help of people like you. Citizen science data is at the core of our climate study. Data from the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, the North American Breeding Bird Survey, and the U.S. Geological Survey defined the ranges where bird species now occur. Audubon scientists paired that bird data with climate data from leading U.S. and Canadian climatologists, including the U.S. National Climatic Data Center. Then, using internationally recognized greenhouse gas emissions scenarios, scientists mapped where each bird’s climatic range may be found in the future as the climate changes. These maps serve as a guide to how each bird’s current range could expand, contract, or shift across three future time periods.
Species Spotlight: American Kestrel

This study is our roadmap for future conservation efforts. Details about methodology and individual species maps can be found online at climate.audubon.org.
SECTION 3

Birds in Ohio Affected by Climate Change

Audubon is privileged to work for birds in collaboration with 24,000 members in Ohio and 18 independent chapters across the state. Together we inspire, engage, and work with diverse audiences to conserve, restore, and enjoy natural habitat in Ohio. Audubon contributes to the conservation of birds in the Mississippi Flyway using a powerful three-pronged approach that includes science, policy, and education.

Birds are not only important indicators of environmental quality, but are also readily embraced by a broad spectrum of American society. We engage people in learning about and protecting birds and their habitats through various programs including Plants for Birds, Climate Ambassador advocate trainings, and Climate Watch. Through citizen science, workshops, social media, and our action alert system, our supporters are a growing force of grassroots activists involved in conservation at every level.
Based on Audubon’s Birds and Climate Change Report, below is a sample of birds at risk in Ohio due to shrinking and shifting climatic ranges.

**Scarlet Tanager**

**Fun fact**
Scarlet Tanagers often play host to eggs of the Brown-headed Cowbird, particularly where forest habitat has been fragmented. When a pair of tanagers notices a female cowbird approaching, they aggressively drive her away. If they don’t notice, the cowbird gets rid of a tanager egg and replaces it with one of her own. The tanagers apparently can’t tell the difference, either before or after the egg hatches, and they raise the imposter along with the rest of their brood.

**Action**
You can help Scarlet Tanagers by growing native plants in your yard or container garden. Native plants attract insects that tanagers love to eat and feed to their young, and they also bear nutritious fruit such as cherries, blackberries, and serviceberries. Visit [audubon.org/plantsforbirds](http://audubon.org/plantsforbirds) to find bird-friendly plants for your area.

**Wood Duck**

**Fun fact**
The widespread and beautiful Wood Duck may be forced north by climate change, putting stress on the bird. Audubon’s climate model predicts a 69 percent loss of current summer range by 2080, with much of their climate range moving into north-central Canada. If female Wood Ducks can find nesting cavities in these regions, the migratory nature of the species may help it on its journey. Like members of most migratory waterfowl species, many Wood Ducks will probably begin to winter further north as ice-free conditions spread that direction.

**Action**
You can help Wood Ducks and many other birds by taking steps to reduce carbon pollution, such as saving electricity at home, contacting your elected officials to support renewable energy standards, and installing solar panels on your rooftop.
Purple Finch

**Fun fact**
Purple Finches appear every two years as far as south as northern Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas. Researchers say this movement is due to the variability in the bird’s food sources. Males of this species are raspberry-colored rather than purple. Females, with their bold facial pattern, resemble small female Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

**Action**
Join Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count (December 14 through January 5) or the Great Backyard Bird Count (February) to look for finches and other birds. Purple Finches spend the winter in Ohio and other parts of the Midwest. Citizen science data helps Audubon better understand and protect birds across the country.


For detailed maps of each bird’s predicted loss of summer or winter range, visit climate.audubon.org/geographical-search/ohio.

Our Birds and Climate Change Report would not have been possible without the help of people like you.
SECTION 4

What You Can Do

There are many different actions you can take to advocate for birds, whether at home, on your computer, or even better, in person. Your actions will help build healthy, climate-resilient bird populations and mobilize a groundswell of support for birds. You don’t have to take all of these steps, but can choose which ones work for you and even bring along a family member or friend!

Where birds thrive, people prosper.
SECTION 4
What You Can Do

Have Conversations
Remember that conversations don’t just happen over coffee (or a good glass of wine). They happen all the time! Think of all the opportunities you have to strike up a conversation about birds, climate change, and how people can get involved—during family dinner, at a party, after church, on the sidelines at your kid’s game, at book club, or at your neighborhood block party.

Share Birds and Climate News Online
Post articles on your social media profiles about climate legislation, the benefits of growing native plants and the new birds you’ve seen because of it, share photos of your volunteer efforts to clean up a local Important Bird Areas, or updates on the impact of climate change on birds. This non-confrontational method is a nice way to educate your friends about the relationship between birds and climate change.

Contribute to Local Birding Forums, Neighborhood Blogs, or Group Email Lists
Post relevant news and events and chime in when birds or climate change come up. Speak up and be proud of your passion for birds and your choice to help them survive global warming.

Give a Presentation
If you enjoy public speaking, consider presenting on birds and climate change to your garden club, bird club, neighborhood association, local library, or civic club. It could be a few slides in a larger presentation on another topic, or the entire presentation. These groups are always eager for guest speakers on a variety of topics. In addition, you can invite them to help you at a local volunteer opportunity!
Do Outreach at a Local Festival

Does your bird or garden group have a table at a local festival or fair? Consider adding materials about climate-threatened birds or put on your “You are what hope looks like to a bird; ask me why” button. Chat people up, let them know easy ways to help birds now, and encourage them to sign up with their email address for more information.

Organize an Event

If you enjoy organizing events, bird-themed events like a neighborhood Birds & Beer evening, Important Bird Area clean-up, community planting event, art shows, or community festivals are great ways to raise awareness and bring new people into the Audubon action network.
SECTION 4

What You Can Do
Write a Letter to the Editor

Write a brief letter to the editor of your local newspaper about why it’s important to you to protect climate-threatened birds, or write a letter in support of proposed policies such as energy efficiency and expanding renewable energy. See Section 7 of this guide for examples.

Contact Elected Officials

• Email your legislator or set up a meeting with your city official encouraging them to support solutions that address climate change and protect birds. See Section 7 of this guide for examples.
• Invite elected officials to Audubon chapter and other bird events, and invite them to tour local parks and Important Bird Areas with an expert birder. Getting them out of the office to see the beauty of the natural areas that need protection is rewarding for everyone!

Plug into our Local Programming

• Sign-up for Audubon Ohio’s emails to stay on top of all our programs and free events!
• Volunteers are an essential part of Audubon centers’ success. The perfect volunteer job may be waiting for you at the Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm (Dayton) or Grange Insurance Audubon Center (Columbus).
• Join a chapter near you! These chapters enable Audubon members and others to meet and share an appreciation of their common interests, creating a culture of conservation in their community through education and advocacy focusing on the conservation and restoration of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Find a nearby chapter at audubon.org/audubon-near-you.
• Watch for Audubon Action Alerts and invitations from Audubon staff to meet with elected officials.
• Give presentations to local groups on how to build bird-friendly communities, and the impact of climate change on birds.
SECTION 5

Building Healthy, Resilient Bird Populations and Communities

There are many ways you can help birds thrive in your community, and we hope you’ll invite your friends and family to join you! Your efforts will do double-duty: You will help birds thrive and inspire more people to act, demonstrating the strong support for birds and climate solutions in your community that your local lawmakers need to see.

Ohio is our home, and we must act to preserve and protect the Ohio we know and love.
Conservation Actions

**Plants for Birds** is a nationwide Audubon initiative mobilizing people to grow 1 million native plants for birds in their yards and communities. The goal of this program is to create valuable habitat for birds and to help them adapt to the effects of a changing climate.

• Check out native plants that work for your community at audubon.org/plantsforbirds.

• Plant native plants at home, at the kids’ schools, at churches, in your neighborhood park or local green space, or with community partners like Habitat for Humanity. Learn more at audubon.org/plantsforbirds and be sure to put up an Audubon sign!

• Work with your city or local government to pass a resolution or ordinance encouraging the use of native plants.

Become a **Climate Ambassador** and be the voice for birds in our critically important Great Lakes region. Our work in these areas is aimed at protecting birds and habitats from the harmful impacts of climate change and other threats, and building local community support for avian conservation.

• Attend local resource meetings, city council meetings, etc.

• Write letters to elected officials or join staff to meet with decision makers.

• Leverage media and social media to educate the public about the Great Lakes, their importance in the flyway, and threats to their health.

• Participate in community outreach at appropriate festivals and events.

• Target outreach to conventional and unconventional audiences; form relationships with community stakeholders.
Citizen Science Opportunities

Counting and documenting where birds are now and how they are responding to changes in climate and habitat is essential to protecting them. You can help Audubon and partner scientists track birds through several opportunities outlined below. You can find more information on these activities online and look out for upcoming emails about these programs.

- Join the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (December annually).
- Sign up for Climate Watch, a bird count in January and June annually.
- Join the Great Backyard Bird Count (February annually).
- Participate in Hummingbirds at Home. (hummingbirdsathome.org)
- Participate in spring bird counts organized by your local Audubon chapter.
- Chapters across Ohio are engaged in fun and important citizen science conservation efforts. Contact your local chapter and find out what projects they have going on.
- Download Audubon’s award-winning bird guide and have 821 North American birds at your fingertips. Visit: audubon.org/apps
- Submit your bird sightings through eBird anytime and anywhere.
SECTION 5
Building Healthy Bird Populations
Support Audubon’s Policy Priorities in Ohio

• Watch for email Action Alerts and share with others. Let your decision makers know that these issues are important to you because you love birds.
• Protect and strengthen Ohio’s clean energy policies, including our state’s renewable energy standards.
• Safeguard Lake Erie’s coastline and estuary health against new and ongoing threats such as pesticides, coal and oil transport, etc.
SECTION 6
Tips for Communicating About Birds and Climate Change

Now that we’ve identified different ways you can advocate for birds, in this section you’ll find helpful tips on how to communicate with fellow bird lovers about birds and climate change. This includes how to start a conversation and a few key phrases to avoid.

Let’s get started.

We all have a duty to protect and be good stewards of the Earth. It’s time to give back to the birds we love.
Let’s Talk C.L.I.M.A.T.E.


**C: Come Together**

People digest new information on climate change through lenses of personal experience, knowledge, and social context. We believe climate change is a bird issue that transcends political stances, values, and other differences. Successful conversations begin when you identify and appeal to each person’s values. Put yourself in his/her shoes to figure out how to make a connection based on your mutual love of birds.

- Ask someone what he or she loves about birds.
- Ask them to describe a positive or hopeful moment they’ve experienced with birds or nature.
- Learn how and why others do what they do.
- Try to understand their beliefs and values. Include everyone.

**L: Listen**

Start every conversation by listening to the people with whom you’re speaking. Allow them to give their opinions on birds and climate change. Listen to the questions they ask. Then make answering their questions and concerns the first priority, so they’ll be open to hearing what you have to say.

**I: Introduce**

Emphasize that you care about taking action on climate because you love birds and want to see them thrive. This will set the tone for a positive conversation. You are not trying to stir up controversy; you’re simply relating information about something you love and feel passionately about. Share stories from your experiences to help frame why you value birds in your life and why we should all work together to ensure their survival.

**M: Make It Real**

Using personal, local stories of effects you have seen due to climate change is one of the best ways to make climate change real. Maybe you are seeing fewer of the birds you love during migration season, or maybe you are seeing the birds you love stay in your backyard for longer than normal because seasonality is changing. Sharing what motivated you to advocate on birds’ behalf can help cultivate a feeling of trust between you and someone else.

You can also use this opportunity to highlight the science behind Audubon’s Birds and Climate Change Report. Use Audubon as a trusted source of information to relay the years of research that inform your concern.

Remember, this program is a positive, proactive effort to engage more people who love birds to help them adapt to a changing climate.
Address Concerns

People have been inundated with climate change messages focused on despair and gloom for years. Focus on solutions addressing the climate change issues and explain how anyone can help birds thrive. When you focus on solution-oriented messages, you avoid making your audience feel emotionally numb to the conversation.

Here are some examples of positive messaging:

- Audubon supporters across Ohio worked together to successfully defend our state’s renewable energy standards, which are reducing carbon pollution and helping birds.
- Wood Thrushes, hummingbirds, and many other species benefit from native plants. By adding just a few native trees or shrubs to your yard, you’re providing food for baby birds and cutting carbon emissions at the same time. Your contribution is simple, but your personal impact is two-fold!

Take Action

Congratulations! You’ve had a successful conversation, and you’ve compelled someone new to share his or her cares and concerns. You’re almost to the finish line, and they’re ready to take action. The first step is simple: We want everyone to create a demand for solutions locally, from growing native plants in their yard to asking community officials what they are doing to protect birds. We need a groundswell of support to this threat, and we need people to know that solutions exist.

Exit with Grace

Your conversation is coming to a close. What can you do now? Offer more resources. You don’t have to be an expert on climate science or its impact on birds. Your role is to inspire others to educate themselves on this crucial issue. Thank them for taking the time to speak with you and remind them you’re there for further discussions.

Rinse and Repeat

Repeat this method with every concern raised. Make sure to start at the listening stage to ensure you’re answering their specific questions and allowing your audience to feel their side is being heard. If someone shares a doubtful anecdote or story of their own, really listen to that fear and uncertainty and try to understand why they’ve formed that opinion on climate change or on birds.

We’ve included message tips in our FAQ section starting on page 41. These will help you relate the science in a way that is accurate and concise.

Try sharing information about a local climate-threatened bird, like the Horned Grebe. This small waterbird migrates through Ohio and nests along lakes and ponds on the northern Great Plains and in the boreal forest of western Canada and Alaska. However, Audubon’s climate model projects a 100 percent loss of its current summer range by 2080. Winter presents some potential gains in climatic range, but this species winters along coasts and at sea, where climate change is expected to influence other variables such as the quality and availability of food.
Key Phrases and Terms to Avoid When Talking About Climate Change

When talking to bird lovers about climate change, the conversation should always focus on protecting birds and preserving their habitats. Mentioning the specific number of birds threatened is helpful and important. However, balance future predictions with reference to the present impact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases to Use</th>
<th>Terms to Avoid</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birds are already experiencing the effects.</td>
<td>Scientists tell us...</td>
<td>Personal stories are nearly always more effective in conversations about climate change. Share the personal impacts of climate change you are seeing in your yard and community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small changes in temperatures are hurting birds.</td>
<td>Temperatures have climbed 1.4 degrees over the past 100 years.</td>
<td>This seemingly small change in temperature is hard to conceptualize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird habitats are shifting and shrinking.</td>
<td>By 2080, bird ranges will decrease by xx percent.</td>
<td>Some may question specific predictions far into the future, but will be more persuaded by impacts that are happening now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have a shared responsibility to protect birds / Birds are in danger, and we have a moral duty to protect them.</td>
<td>The Wood Duck could lose 69% of its current summer range by 2080.</td>
<td>Similarly, a broader, hopeful message will be more resonant than a specific prediction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Motivating Bird Lovers to Act

When motivating members to act, the focus should stay in the present and talk about the impact on birds today. It’s critical to emphasize the local impacts that you seen in your own yard, and how the birds you see every day are threatened by climate change.

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<th>Phrases to Use</th>
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<tr>
<td>Preserve and protect the (state/city/community) I love</td>
<td>Extreme impacts / results are horrifying</td>
<td>Positive, hopeful messages will resonate more than doom and gloom messaging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good stewards of all creation</td>
<td>Humans are solely to blame for climate change</td>
<td>Some may disagree with the exact amount of climate change caused by humans, but the vast majority of Audubon members agree humans are partly, if not mostly, to blame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A healthy and thriving planet for our children and grandchildren / future generations</td>
<td>If we don’t act, the Earth will be unable to support life as we know it.</td>
<td>Doom and gloom messages paralyze members’ motivation and can cause skepticism.</td>
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Communicating with Skeptics

In conversations about birds and climate change with skeptics, it’s important not to dwell on the degree to which humans are causing climate change and instead emphasize the importance of improving the environment. Additionally, Audubon is a trusted source. Rather than start a detailed discussion of the science, emphasize what Audubon research has found about birds and their habitats.

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<tr>
<td>No matter the amount of human impact, we should preserve and protect our environment.</td>
<td>Humans alone are causing climate change</td>
<td>There is a strong sense among climate skeptics that natural cycles are the cause of climate change. Focus on the fact that even if our contribution is little, it is too much. We should all do our part to protect the Earth.</td>
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Additional Tips for Communicating About Birds and Climate Change

Based on message and engagement testing by Audubon’s Climate Initiative

Climate change threatens more than 300 species of birds in North America and thousands more worldwide. To tackle this threat, Audubon’s network is taking action through conservation, science, public engagement, and grassroots advocacy. We believe, and have confirmed through talking with our members, that taking action on climate change is not a partisan issue. People from all across the political spectrum, all across the country and beyond need to come together to protect the birds we love and the habitats they depend on.
Here are quick highlights from Audubon’s research about how to communicate effectively and inclusively about the issue of climate change.

• **Make it about birds:** Climate change can seem like an overwhelmingly complex and abstract issue. But we don’t need to tell the whole story of climate change with elaborate temperature graphs or atmospheric data. Tell people that climate change affects beloved species, like the Bald Eagle, Wood Thrush, or Rufous Hummingbird, and tap into their love for these birds. Put birds front and center in the text and photos you use when talking about this issue.

• **Make it local and personal:** Climate change isn’t a faraway problem—it’s effects are happening right now in your backyard. Tell the story through local birds that are climate-threatened. For example, in North Carolina, you can tell people about the Brown-headed Nuthatch; in Minnesota, talk about the Common Loon; or in Maryland, talk about the Baltimore Oriole.

• **Make it hopeful:** Positive messages, such as protecting the birds we love for future generations, tend to resonate better than focusing on doom and gloom. You can tell people, “You are what hope looks like to a bird.” The ideas of responsibility or moral duty also resonate well with many people.

• **Tell people what they can do to help:** Offer simple, concrete actions like growing native plants in your yard, emailing elected officials about renewable energy, or talking to friends and family about climate change. Many Audubon supporters we’ve contacted are ready and willing to take action on this issue—keeping in mind that some people might prefer to sign an online petition, while others might prefer to build a nest box for a climate-threatened bird.

• **Most people don’t need all the scientific details:** Many people don’t need to know all the details of Audubon’s climate science to care about the issue and get involved. Again, know your audience: When talking to Christmas Bird Count veterans, you may want to talk about exact percentages of range loss by the year 2080. When talking to other audiences, you can say things like, “Climate change threatens more than 50 bird species in Ohio, and their ranges are likely to shift and shrink in the coming decades.” People can find more details from Audubon’s Birds and Climate Change Report at [climate.audubon.org](http://climate.audubon.org).

• **No need to agree exactly about the causes of warming:** Many Audubon members we’ve talked with who identify as conservative or independent were less concerned with discussing exactly how much of the changing climate is caused by human activity. What matters most is that birds we all care about are at risk, and we can take action to help them.

• **No need for extremes:** It’s often better to avoid extreme language, such as “severely” or “disastrous,” in describing the climate threat to birds. While the problem is serious and we need to communicate this, we’ve found that not everyone responds well to dire adjectives and adverbs.

• **Switch it up:** Feel free to use variations like “our changing climate” or “a warming world” along with “climate change” and “global warming.”
SECTION 7

Taking the Extra Step

Contacting your elected officials or speaking out publicly for action on climate are two of the most significant steps you can take to make a difference for birds. When you speak out, you create a demand for change in your community and this growing demand will have a significant impact. To help, we have provided samples below to get you started. This includes a call script for speaking with legislators and their offices, a sample op-ed and letter to the editor to submit to your local paper or news website, and sample social media posts.

Change happens one conversation at a time.
Sample call script for calls to legislator offices:
Hello (x legislator or staffer), I’m one of your constituents.
I’m calling to urge you to support renewable energy (or insert specific legislation).
I’m a member of the National Audubon Society and we are calling on our elected leaders to take action on climate change to protect birds and people alike.
It is clear our climate is changing, and we need our elected leaders to take action to address it.
Passing (policy x/clean energy solutions) is critically important to me.
Let’s make our state a leader on clean energy solutions.
Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sample Op-ed

Note: Op-eds (short for “opposite the editorial page”) offer a chance to express your point of view on an issue relevant to your community. They appear in a newspaper’s or website’s opinion section along with editorials by the newspaper’s editors. You can find instructions for submitting your op-ed on the opinion page of the paper, online (typically in the “opinion” section of the paper’s site), or by calling the newspaper and asking for the opinion editor or desk. Usually, op-eds are between 500 and 800 words, but check with your paper for any special requirements.

Example text:

As a conservationist and advocate for our state’s wildlife, I have seen firsthand the impacts of climate change in Ohio. It is clear the Earth is getting warmer, and it’s also clear that there are steps we all can take to preserve and protect our planet and the creatures that inhabit it.

The National Audubon Society, an organization I am a member of that works to protect birds and their habitats, spent several years studying the impact of climate change on birds. They found that 314 North American birds could face extinction if global warming continues at its current pace. The good news is that it’s not too late to change course, and we all can take actions that will reduce the amount of emissions in our air and help protect our environment.

One of the easiest actions we all can take is to make our yards bird-friendly using native plants. Not only will this provide food and shelter for wildlife, it will also help lessen water usage.

It is also critical that our state legislators support common-sense environmental legislation. This includes continuing to prioritize renewable energy in Ohio. Our state’s renewable energy standard requires power utilities in Ohio to generate at least 12.5 percent of power by the year 2027 from renewable energy, such as solar and wind. This is a commonsense solution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Renewable energy standards help diversify our state’s economy, reduce air pollution, and reduce the amount of carbon pollution, the main cause of climate change.

We should also do all that we can to develop solar energy in Ohio, another way to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and help birds. Ohioans can install solar panels on their roof or subscribe to community solar plants and receive credits on their power bill. Our state legislators should do all that they can to continue to increase the availability of solar power in our state.

Lastly, we should look at other ways to reduce the amount of carbon emissions, including a revenue-neutral carbon tax. This is a proven method to reduce emissions while ensuring our economy continues to grow by balancing the tax on emissions with a tax cut in other areas, like the sales tax.

The futures of birds, other wildlife, and of people in a warming world are intertwined. When birds and wildlife thrive, we all thrive.
Sample Letter to the Editor

Note: Letters to the editor are a chance for you to contribute to community conversation in your local newspaper. You can write in response to a specific article (if so, reference the article date and headline in your submission), or you can offer a new way of looking at an issue or idea. You can find instructions for submitting your letter on the opinion page of the paper, online (typically in the “opinion” section of the paper’s site), or by calling the newspaper and asking for the opinion editor or desk. Usually, letters to the editor should be no longer than 250 words.

Example text:

As a conservationist and advocate for our state’s wildlife, I have seen firsthand the impacts of climate change in Ohio. It is clear the Earth is getting warmer, and it’s also clear that there are steps we all can take to preserve and protect our planet and the creatures that inhabit it.

The National Audubon Society, an organization I am a member of that works to protect birds and their habitats, spent several years studying the impact of climate change on North American birds. They found that 314 birds could face extinction if global warming continues at its current pace. The good news is that it’s not too late, and we all can take actions that will reduce the amount of carbon emissions and help protect our environment.

One of the easiest actions we all can take is to make our yards bird-friendly using native plants. Not only will this provide food and shelter for wildlife, it will also help lessen water usage. Our state legislators can also prioritize and pass policies that conserve our environment. This includes supporting our state’s renewable energy standards, developing more solar energy options, and even supporting a tax on carbon emissions.

The futures of birds, other wildlife, and of people in a warming world are intertwined. When birds and wildlife thrive, we all thrive.
Social media posts

One of the easiest ways you can share information and take an action to protect birds from climate change is to periodically share posts from Audubon’s Facebook page. Below are a few examples of how you can share Audubon’s material. But the most effective posts will come from your own voice, so follow Audubon’s social media pages and share the climate content that speaks to you.

Examples:

• This beautiful American Kestrel needs our help to adapt to a changing climate. Join me to support the National Audubon Society’s work to protect bird habitats across our country. (share Audubon post of climate-threatened bird)
• Native plants are a beautiful way to support wildlife and save on your water bill. Check out this full listing of native plants from the National Audubon Society. Visit: audubon.org/native-plants.
• I love birds and want to do all that I can to protect birds and people alike. This bird migration season, it’s important to understand the impact of climate change on North American birds. (share the Birds and Climate Change Report link, climate.audubon.org)
Climate change and its effects on our birds are complex issues. It’s okay if you don’t have the answer to every question someone asks. To assist you, we’ve provided a list of common questions you may encounter.

Answering Climate Science Concerns

Many people don’t talk about climate change because they’re worried they don’t know enough climate science to answer tough questions on why it’s happening.

The good news? We’re focused on what birds need in our changing climate, not on its causes or history. So when someone asks about climate science concerns, you can have a simple answer ready:

“We may not agree on why climate change is happening or how much humans are to blame, but birds are going to have a hard time adapting no matter the cause.”
How are birds and climate connected?
• Birds, like people and all living things, can only live within certain ranges of temperature, precipitation, and seasonal change.
• If it’s too hot, too cold, too wet, or too dry, birds can’t survive, just like a person can’t live in Antarctica without sufficient equipment and supplies. Even a small change in temperature can have a big impact on birds.

Won’t birds just shift where they breed and rest in winter?
• Climate conditions also affect birds’ food supplies, habitats, predators, and competitors.
• As the climate changes, birds may lose the ability to survive in a place altogether. They may lose food supplies or habitat and be overwhelmed by their new predators.

Why does Audubon now say climate change is the biggest threat to birds when habitat fragmentation due to development was the biggest threat before?
• Habitat fragmentation and loss is still one of the biggest threats to many bird species. Audubon’s Birds and Climate Change Report shows that its effects will amplify as global temperatures rise.
• As birds move to find suitable climates, the specialized habitats they need in their extended or new areas may not be there due to development.
• We must work to protect the habitats we know are important now and learn which ones may be important to birds in the future.

Why is Audubon putting so much effort into climate change?
• During the last four centuries, only nine North American birds have gone extinct.
• Audubon’s new report shows 314 species could face severe declines or extinction by 2080. That’s about half of North American birds.
• If we work together, we can reduce the impact on birds.
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