As a Great Egret Society member, your gifts fund Audubon's well-integrated program of science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation. Your leadership-level support lets us stand up for birds, defending the clean air, clean water, healthy habitat, and stable climate they—and we all—require. Please give as generously as you can at Audubon.org/greategretsociety.
One Audubon

Since its founding in 1905, Audubon has worked for the benefit of birds and the places they need to survive and thrive, building a widely respected centrist brand and a powerful legacy of conservation success.

Uniquely positioned to lead the way, Audubon boasts 23 state and regional offices, 41 nature centers, and 463 chapters across all 50 states. Audubon is local and authentic everywhere.

But we’re more than just a collection of lonely conservation islands. Audubon is building bridges to take the most effective ideas emerging from experts throughout our network and amplify them to achieve the greatest possible national and hemisphere-wide impact: to create One Audubon.

We are bringing science, policy, and conservation planning together and rigorously measuring our progress as we go.

And understanding that bird conservation cannot be done on an ad hoc basis, we focus our work around five core strategic priorities to help protect birds throughout their life cycles, and wherever they happen to land.

Strategic Priorities

Audubon effectively collaborates and coordinates our conservation efforts across flyways and the hemisphere.

- **Coasts:** Audubon is protecting and restoring coastlines to strengthen populations of shorebirds and preserve their habitats throughout the Western Hemisphere.

- **Working Lands:** Audubon collaborates with landowners across the hemisphere to increase the quality of habitat on millions of acres of working lands.

- **Water:** Audubon’s Water strategy focuses on influencing water management decisions that balance the needs of birds, people, and economies.

- **Bird-Friendly Communities:** Understanding that human environments provide crucial resources for birds, Audubon strives to find shared wins for birds and people.

- **Climate:** Climate change is the biggest threat to birds today. Audubon protects the places birds need in a warming world and advocates for essential public policy changes.
Audubon’s Policy Agenda

Audubon’s policy agenda reflects where voice, expertise, membership and chapter relationships can make the most difference for birds and the places they need today and tomorrow.

Defense

Alaska public lands and waters: Maintaining protections for important places—like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—from development, a battle Audubon has fought every time a threat to these iconic places arises.

Bedrock laws: Ensuring protections for birds and the places they need under bedrock laws like the 100-year-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Sage-grouse conservation: Defending the historic Greater Sage-Grouse conservation agreements which protect 67 million acres of the iconic western landscape for 350 species of other birds and wildlife.

Conservation programs: Advocating for strong funding for local conservation efforts that benefit birds, in particular, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Delaware River Basin Initiative, Everglades Restoration, and our work in the Gulf of Mexico.

Offense

Climate solutions: Leading on climate solutions that protect birds and bird habitat at the federal, state, and local levels, and on the international front.

Coastal conservation: Engaging a diverse coalition for coastal conservation and natural infrastructure solutions like dunes and wetlands, as well as protecting the marine resources sea birds need to survive.

Western water: Continuing to work with local communities, industry, and even other national governments to protect this critical resource, from the Colorado River Basin to the Great Salt Lake, for the benefit of both people and birds.

Farm Bill: Maintaining strong funding for wildlife habitat conservation and making programs work better in the 2018 Farm Bill legislation.
Thank You: The Impact of your Support

Thanks to your leadership level support in combination with our extensive grassroots network, Audubon has seen extraordinary successes in recent months.

- Audubon and partners have collaborated to pass landmark conservation bond initiatives from California to Florida. Most recently, California voters passed a $4 billion state bond measure that will provide critical funding for state parks, clean water, climate change resilience, and wildlife habitat, including $200 million for critical dust mitigation and habitat restoration projects at California’s largest lake, the Salton Sea.

- Audubon was actively involved in negotiations that updated a treaty detailing how water is managed across the shared United States-Mexico border. The resolution designated more than 68 billion gallons of Colorado River water for environmental purposes.

- Piping Plovers are nesting in Pennsylvania for the first time since the 1950s. Audubon Pennsylvania worked with partners for years to monitor the shore of Lake Erie and remove invasive plants from the beach where the eggs have been laid.

- Audubon Maryland-DC led successful efforts to plant 213,000 clumps of marsh grass, completing the first stage of restoration to the Chesapeake Bay’s sinking saltmarshes. The $1.1-million project will restore marsh that’s flooding as sea level rises, and the program’s success will be measured by the presence of marsh-breeding birds, like Black Rails and Saltmarsh Sparrows, in the area.

- After a tireless campaign led by Audubon South Carolina, the state’s most important land-protection program, the Conservation Bank, has been renewed forever. The state bank, which has invested $150 million in grants to cities, land trusts, and other entities to protect ecologically sensitive areas, would have been terminated this June had the program not been renewed.

- In July, Birmingham Audubon discovered that more than 100 eggs in a huge Least Tern colony of nests were destroyed by beachgoers offshoreshore of Dauphin Island, Alabama. Staffers sprang into action to save the remaining terns—which are federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act—and the birds managed to fledge 83 chicks this year.

Audubon Defends the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in Court and in Congress

On July 3, 1918, Congress passed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in response to public outcry over the mass slaughter of birds for their feathers. Efforts to pass the law were led by Audubon chapters and ultimately became National Audubon Society’s founding victory.

But bucking decades of policy and practice, in December, the Department of the Interior declared it will no longer enforce the law for any birds killed unintentionally. This new interpretation lets industries off the hook for bird deaths caused by hazards such as oil waste pits, oil spills, mining activity, power line electrocutions, and other threats.

The MBTA has a history of inspiring businesses to lead the way with innovations that have saved birds by the million. It’s rescued avian species that once verged on extinction. And it’s held companies accountable for the bird deaths they cause, like in 2010’s BP Deepwater Horizon disaster. The change to this bedrock law drastically reduces the incentive for companies to adopt best practices that save birds from preventable harm, along with the ability to recover after events such as oil spills by applying fines under the law to habitat restoration.

In response, in May we filed Audubon v Dept. of the Interior—a landmark lawsuit in federal court to defend our country’s most important bird protection law. Additionally, throughout the year, Audubon and our partners have worked to protect the Migratory Bird Treaty Act from Congressional attacks, such as HR 4239 and the Cheney “bird-killer amendment,” which would permanently change the law and its ability to address preventable industrial hazards.

With your support, Audubon can continue fighting to ensure this critical law remains a vital tool for conserving birds in its next century.
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Audubon Files Suit to Save Sage-Grouse

In 2015, Audubon, along with federal and state agencies, conservationists, ranchers, energy industry representatives, and other private landowners, united to celebrate collective commitments safeguarding the sagebrush’s most iconic resident, Greater Sage-Grouse. These landmark conservation plans, resulting from years of collaboration at an unprecedented scale, prevented the need for an Endangered Species Act listing and promised a new, brighter future—not only for the sage-grouse, but for the American West.

These protections were central to preserving the species, whose population once numbered in the millions but was greatly decimated by oil and gas development and other disturbances.

However, since taking office in 2017, the Trump administration has ignored those protections while offering hundreds of new oil and gas leases in important sage-grouse habitat. Based on a preliminary list, virtually all of a 700,000 acre lease sale scheduled for December in Wyoming is in these protected lands.

This is a clear violation of federal law, and Audubon, along with other conservation groups, is fighting back. In April, we filed suit against the Bureau of Land Management and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to demand that the administration uphold the deal made to save the Greater Sage-Grouse and its habitat in 10 Western states.

And in August, 40,000 Americans—including 15,000 Audubon members and supporters—spoke out, submitting comments urging the Bureau of Land Management not to weaken sage-grouse conservation plans.

Working together, we can continue to protect the sage-grouse—in addition to the more than 350 other species of wildlife, including many other birds like Burrowing Owls, Sage Thrashers, and Western Meadowlarks, who depend on a healthy sagebrush ecosystem to survive.
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The State of Birds in Our National Parks

This March, Audubon and the National Park Service joined forces to publish a groundbreaking study detailing major changes coming to the bird species found in our national parks. Data reveals that on average, 25 percent of the species that inhabit some of America’s most well-known parks could be completely different by 2050—all because of climate change.

Analyzing 274 sites, researchers overlaid them with climate suitability models for birds known to spend summers and winters within the parks. The models were then linked to two different trajectories of greenhouse gas emissions representing both low and high emissions paths, with the low-end pathway incorporating the most stringent mitigation scenario and the high-end representing our current trajectory.

Scenarios with lower carbon emissions projected fewer changes in parks. But on the high end of emissions—or “business as usual”—Bald Eagles may leave the Grand Canyon during the winter and Mountain Bluebirds may stop breeding in Badlands National Park over the summer.

These drastic climate projections deliver another sobering reminder of the threat climate change poses to birds and stress how vital lowering carbon pollution is to reducing bird turnover in these protected places.

To help parks prepare for these substantial changes, each site will receive a “climate brief” that outlines: which bird species are currently found within the park, which new species may colonize the park, and which current species may be locally extirpated—or completely wiped from the area. The parks have also been organized into five trend groups based on turnover rate. Understanding the characteristics unique to each group will help to inform work both in parks and with neighboring communities.

As many birds increasingly rely on our national parks, it’s up to us to protect them. We must stand together to act on climate locally, in our states, and in Washington and help mitigate the threats of climate change to so many vulnerable birds that call public lands home.
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