

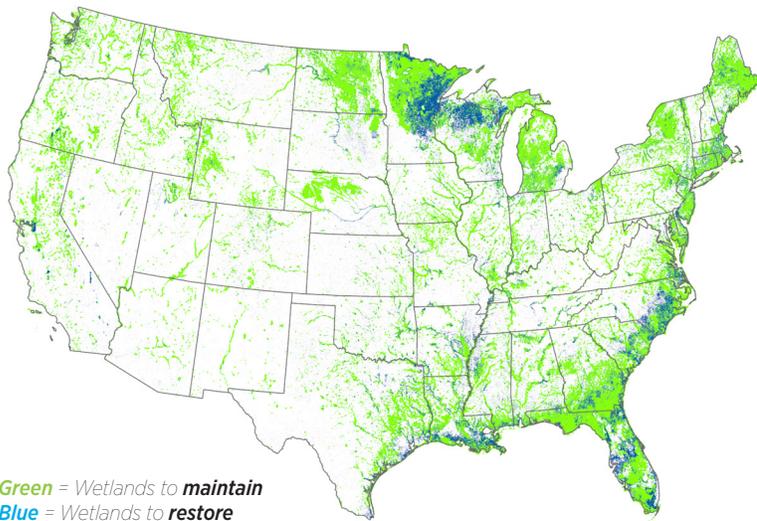
Wetlands Are Natural Climate Solutions

About Audubon's Natural Climate Solutions Report

Audubon's science team focused on one of the most powerful tools in the climate mitigation toolkit: the natural ability of ecosystems to store carbon. By keeping more carbon in the ground and capturing it in plants, we can reduce carbon dioxide in our atmosphere.

Researchers looked at forest, grassland, aridland, coastal and freshwater wetland, tundra, and urban and suburban ecosystems. In each, they found significant overlap between important bird habitat and areas of high carbon value.

The bottom line: what's good for birds is also good for climate change mitigation.



Green = Wetlands to **maintain**
Blue = Wetlands to **restore**

Photo: (Top) Snowy Egret. Peter Brannon/Audubon Photography Awards.
Map: Carol Zuber-Mallison/ZMGRAPHICS.

<< A small wading bird known for its bright yellow feet, the **Snowy Egret** relies on wetlands for its food.

Takeaways from the Natural Climate Solutions Report

Many birds, like waterfowl, hawks, shorebirds, marshbirds, and songbirds, depend on the energy-rich resources provided by freshwater and coastal wetlands for breeding and refueling during migration. Degradation and conversion of wetland habitats can release carbon into the atmosphere; proper management and restoration can allow these areas to become effective carbon sinks.

- Despite their limited area in the US, coastal wetlands store the highest amount of carbon per acre (> 100 tons/acre), and interior freshwater wetlands also have relatively high carbon storage. Wetlands also help communities adapt to climate change by providing natural water storage, absorbing storm surge, and alleviating flooding.
- The majority (> 50%) of priority areas in wetland habitats are privately owned, highlighting the importance of working with landowners and investing in federal policies that will incentivize maintenance and restoration of wetlands on private lands.
- Wetlands are disproportionately important to birds, and provide habitat for severely declining and climate-vulnerable species like Saltmarsh Sparrow, Black Tern, and Louisiana Waterthrush.
- Conservation of freshwater and coastal wetlands will help ensure that wetland-dependent bird species can locate necessary habitat under changing climate conditions while also providing mitigation potential and opportunities for communities to adapt.