



Audubon Great Lakes

2025
IMPACT
REPORT



 Audubon
GREAT LAKES

FROM OUR VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Uniting Through Birds



FOR 120 YEARS, Audubon has brought people together through the shared wonder of birds. What began as a movement to protect these species has grown into a hemispheric force for conservation—safeguarding the habitats that sustain us all.

Today, as the planet faces unprecedented environmental challenges, we are building on that legacy to meet this moment. Like the birds we protect, Audubon continues to adapt and evolve to match the scale and complexity of the threats ahead.

As we approach the midpoint of Flight Plan, our strategic plan, I am proud to share the stories and accomplishments that reflect the progress we have made toward our ambitious goals.

Flight Plan calls for the protection and conservation of 300 million acres of connected, climate-resilient habitat stretching from Chile to Alaska. We are also accelerating the transition to renewable energy and advancing natural climate solutions that store billions of tons of carbon in forests, wetlands, and grasslands to slow the effects of climate change.

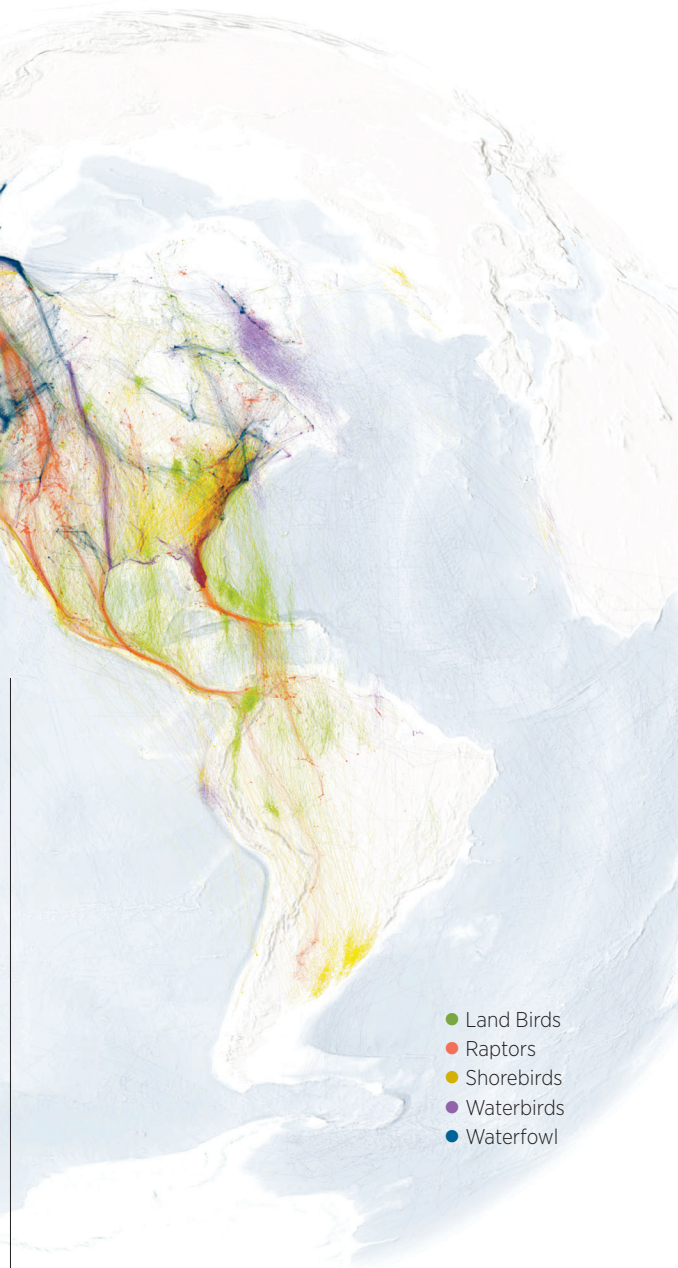
Together with partners and supporters like you, Audubon is achieving lasting conservation results across the hemisphere and here in the Great Lakes.

This report highlights how our regional work contributes to this collective effort. Every acre protected, every policy advanced, and every person inspired by birds brings us closer to a future where birds, people, and the planet thrive.

Thank you for your continued commitment.

With gratitude,

MICHELLE PARKER
VICE PRESIDENT AND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AUDUBON GREAT LAKES



- Land Birds
- Raptors
- Shorebirds
- Waterbirds
- Waterfowl

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From Vision to Impact: Audubon's Flight Plan Progress

Through Flight Plan, Audubon is leveraging the power of birds to drive conservation at the scale our planet needs. From conserving millions of acres of habitat to advancing renewable energy and deepening connections across the hemisphere, we are proving that, together, we can tackle the drivers of climate change and biodiversity loss while reversing the precipitous decline of birds across the Americas.



2028 MILESTONE: HABITAT CONSERVATION

Protect 300 million acres of connected, climate-resilient bird habitat across the Americas

Under Flight Plan, Audubon is influencing more than 200 million acres—an extraordinary achievement that includes over 80 million acres already conserved and another 152 million in the pipeline.



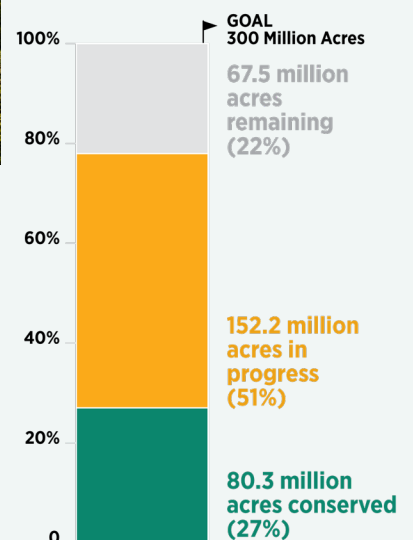
Seal River Watershed
Indigenous Protected
Area Initiative

HABITAT CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

- In Latin America, Conserva Aves has created or expanded 164 protected areas to date, including 660,000+ acres in 2025 alone.
- In Maryland, Audubon and partners identified 29,000 acres of saltmarsh for protection and restoration benefitting birds and people in coastal communities.
- The Great Salt Lake Watershed Enhancement Trust, co-led by Audubon and The Nature Conservancy, delivered more than 70,000 acre-feet of water to the lake and its wetlands and leveraged \$1 million to unlock another \$52 million in funding from the State of Utah.
- In Canada, the 12-million-acre Seal River Watershed took a huge step toward permanent protections with interim protections from industrial development.
- Through *BirdReturns*, Audubon has worked with private landowners in California's Central Valley to create 90,000 acres of temporary flooded habitat, providing healthy habitat for 500,000 birds and improved water quality for communities in the surrounding areas.
- In South Dakota, we secured 22,000+ acres of marginal cropland and adjacent upland for restoration into healthy grasslands through our Conservation Forage program.

PROGRESS TOWARD GOAL

As of July 1, 2025





2028 MILESTONE: CLIMATE ACTION

Advocate for the deployment of 100 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy—enough to power 75 million homes—and support responsibly sited transmission infrastructure • Conserve forests, wetlands, grasslands, and other habitats that can collectively sequester and store 30 billion tons of carbon

Audubon's Climate Milestone addresses the climate crisis in ways that benefit both birds and people—pairing rapid, responsible expansion of renewable energy with the power of natural systems to sequester and store carbon.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Audubon has advanced 70 projects that are accelerating decarbonization while protecting important habitat. We have moved forward nearly 40 GW of renewable generation and 10 GW of transmission.



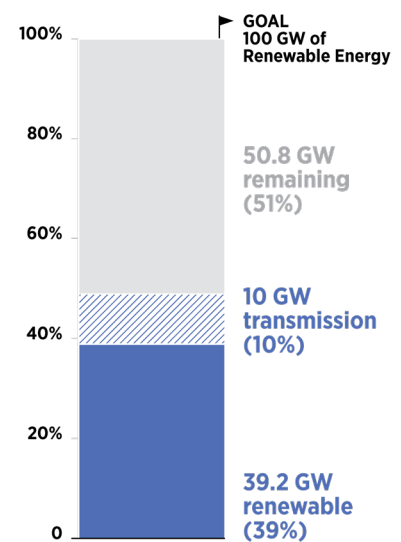
Wind turbines in the ocean off the coast of Block Island near Rhode Island.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Audubon helped pass a landmark Minnesota law allowing power transmission lines to be co-located along highway corridors, reducing habitat fragmentation while helping unlock clean energy access.
- Working with lawmakers and utilities in California, we helped strengthen wildlife-friendly solar siting standards, including the Darden Clean Energy Project in Fresno County—the largest in the U.S.
- We published our science report—*Developing the Offshore Wind Birds Need*—that offers a path to environmentally responsible energy development.

PROGRESS TOWARD GOAL

As of July 1, 2025



NATURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

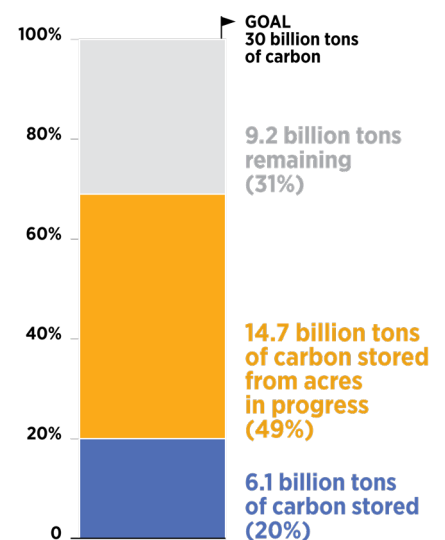
Audubon has sequestered and stored 6.1 billion tons of carbon, with another 14.7 billion tons expected from landscapes where lasting protection and restoration is already in motion, reflecting the powerful impact of conservation work underway today.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Audubon completed a major study of mangroves in Panama Bay and Parita Bay, which concluded that this habitat is projected to sequester 26.6 million tons of CO₂, providing \$155 million annually in economic benefits.
- We secured \$1.2 million from the U.S. Forest Service to support our work with South Carolina “small-acreage” forest owners—who collectively manage 87 percent of the state’s privately owned forests, which effectively sequester and store carbon.
- At Climate Week NYC 2025 and IUCN’s 2025 World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi, Audubon presented our natural climate solutions science, and led discussions on natural climate solutions at COP30 in Brazil.

PROGRESS TOWARD GOAL

As of July 1, 2025





2028 MILESTONE: POLICY LEADERSHIP

Work with policymakers at the local, state, country, and global levels to accomplish Audubon's Healthy Birds, Healthy Planet policy agenda



Bold policy action and sustained public funding are essential for reversing biodiversity loss and addressing climate change. Since Flight Plan launched, Audubon has helped secure more than 100 policies shaping a healthier future for birds and people.

Photo: Farmers, ranchers, and Audubon staff gathered in Washington, D.C., for the 2025 Farm Bill Fly-In, meeting with members of Congress on Capitol Hill.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Audubon supported the passage of three federal policies: the America's Conservation Enhancement Reauthorization Act, the Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm Act, and the Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act.
- With 30 Senate and Hill staffers, we co-hosted a State of the Birds briefing on Capitol Hill to support the threatened Bird Banding Lab and the North American Breeding Bird Survey—critical federal programs that advance bird science.
- We secured record-high funding for key Farm Bill conservation programs, scaling Audubon Conservation Ranching and the Conservation Forage initiatives.
- We helped pass Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund which steers nearly half of state lottery proceeds—approximately \$2 billion—to conservation over the next 25 years.



2028 MILESTONE: COMMUNITY BUILDING

Double the number of bird lovers and conservationists who support Audubon and advance our mission



Birding during Little Creek Summer Camp near the Audubon Center at Riverlands in Florissant, Missouri.

Flight Plan unites Audubon's community work, linking Conservation Action Centers, Sanctuaries, Community and Campus Chapters, next generation programs, community science initiatives, and millions of members and supporters into a powerful network of action.

In 2025 alone, Audubon directly engaged 2.3 million bird lovers and conservationists through this network.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 32 Centers and 29 Sanctuaries serve as Audubon's front doors, welcoming individuals and communities into conservation action.
- More than 400 active community chapters connect people locally through conservation and advocacy.
- Audubon on Campus now spans 100 colleges and universities in 38 states, including 22 chapters at Minority Serving Institutions and eight at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- We hosted two Audubon Leadership Conferences: 350+ participants from 32 states and 11 countries at Estes Park, Colorado, in 2023; 450+ participants from 48 states and 11 countries in Montreal, Canada, in 2025.
- Audubon mobilized an annual average of 80,000+ participants across 21 countries in the Christmas Bird Count, completing more than 5,300 counts and documenting over 85 million birds.

Connecting healthy,
climate-resilient habitat
across the Americas

Great Lakes



Piping Plovers

AUDUBON GREAT LAKES advanced key milestones under Audubon's Flight Plan by protecting and restoring essential habitats across the Great Lakes basin. This year, the team restored 84 acres, enhanced 710 acres, and led or co-led planning for more than 25,000 acres of wetland habitat. Our restoration of Ottawa Sands County Park in Michigan earned a 2025 National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials Award, transforming a former sand mine into 72 acres of thriving interdunal wetlands and 3,300 feet of restored shoreline. Audubon also helped advance four responsibly sited solar projects and mobilized 13,256 actions and 25,923 messages to legislators in support

of wetland protections, clean energy, and conservation funding—demonstrating the power of science, policy, and people working together for birds and climate.

By ensuring that wetlands are healthy and functioning here in the Great Lakes, we help migratory species like Piping Plovers, Black Terns, and Least Bitterns safely reach their breeding areas to raise the next generation of Great Lakes birds. In addition, this work strengthens vital ecosystems across the region—improving water quality, reducing flooding, storing carbon, and providing critical habitat that supports both wildlife and communities throughout the Great Lakes.

Wetland Restoration in Wisconsin



Swamp
Sparrow

Audubon Great Lakes worked to secure wetland restoration funding in the biennial Wisconsin state budget. The budget includes \$2 million in funding for **The Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Grant Program** that provides funds for local governments to restore and conserve wetlands and undertake other proactive strategies before flooding events occur. Audubon also worked to include \$350,000 for the **Oneida Bird Monitoring Program**, which is a partnership between the Oneida Nation, Audubon Great Lakes, Northeastern Wisconsin Bird Alliance, and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay (UWGB) Cofrin Center for Biodiversity, that is working to understand how birds are responding to this important conservation effort. Since 2021, **volunteer bird monitors have conducted over 1,500 surveys**, documented more than 200 bird species, and counted more than 200,000 individual birds at Oneida restoration sites—an incredible testament to the importance of this restoration and the dedication of the project volunteers.



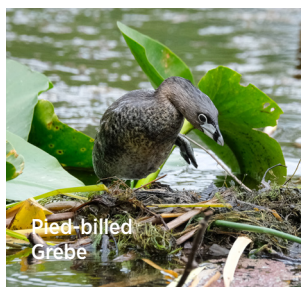
An Award- Winning Transformation

Audubon Great Lakes habitat restoration work with Ottawa Sands County Park in Michigan received a 2025 NACPRO Award for transforming a former sand mine into a thriving natural area, with 3,300 linear feet of shoreline restored and 72 acres of interdunal wetlands and wildlife habitat revitalized. The conservation effort supports some of Michigan's highest-quality natural communities and provides critical stopover habitat for migratory birds. The region is recognized for its biodiversity and its importance on both regional and global scales. The collaborative effort included native vegetation establishment and placement of large coarse woody debris, enriching the wetlands and shoreline, fostering a thriving ecosystem and restored wetland habitat for the benefit of birds, fish, and local communities. This work will also help improve water quality and increase climate resiliency for local communities that have suffered from flooding.

Above: Ottawa Sands County Park.

HIGHLIGHTS

Through Flight Plan, Audubon Great Lakes is influencing 57,109 acres. Below are 2025 highlights of the work behind the success.

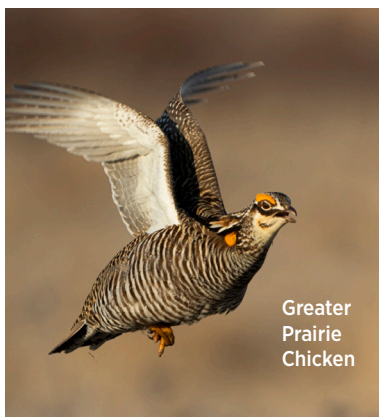


Pied-billed Grebe

AUDUBON AND PARTNERS are leading a community-driven effort in Gary, Indiana, to restore 400 acres of wetlands at the Marshall Town March Complex including Hatcher Park and Marshalltown Marsh that will improve flood resilience, water quality, and habitat for migratory birds while expanding equitable public access to nature.

OUR TEAM WORKED DIRECTLY WITH LANDOWNERS

in Wisconsin to develop Habitat Management Plans for ranches covering more than 2,500 acres to improve grassland habitat and connectivity near leks—communal breeding grounds for Greater Prairie-Chicken and other species.



Greater Prairie Chicken

THROUGH CONSERVATION, ART, BIRD, AND NATURE PROGRAMMING, our team increased membership at Grange Insurance Audubon Center and Aullwood Audubon Center in Ohio by 50 percent. In addition to reaching 130,000 center visitors, we engaged more than 700 households during the statewide Plant Sale and Native Plant Challenge, where we sold over 10,000 native trees and shrubs.

WE COORDINATED MARSH BIRD AND SHOREBIRD MONITORING on more than 27,000 acres in the Great Lakes region to help inform land management decisions. By providing data on wetland health and the effectiveness of restoration efforts, land managers can directly see how their actions impact bird communities and help determine if their methods are successful and what adjustments might be needed.

AUDUBON GREAT LAKES CONVENED conservation partners and leaders to advance several initiatives, from a multistakeholder collaboration to develop a science-based framework for marsh bird conservation across the Midwest and Great Lakes to the Great Lakes Coastal Symposium, where a record-breaking 250 partners gathered to advance shared goals for coastal resiliency and habitat conservation in the Great Lakes region.



American Bittern

AUDUBON GREAT LAKES WORKED TO SAFEGUARD OHIO'S LANDMARK WATER QUALITY PROGRAM, H2OHIO,

by encouraging Governor DeWine to veto language from the state budget that would have prohibited H2Ohio dollars from being used to purchase land or conservation easements. Land acquisition and conservation easements have helped to make H2Ohio a success.

OUR TEAM RALLIED A GROWING COMMUNITY of advocates on behalf of the conservation issues that matter most to them—from wetland protections to conservation funding. Our collective outreach included nearly 26,000 messages to state legislators.

AUDUBON GREAT LAKES CONDUCTED EXTENSIVE OUTREACH TO DECISION-MAKERS this year, holding 295 meetings with legislators, including 16 bird walks; 3 State Advocacy Days in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana; and 4 Birds and Brews events. Through these efforts and the 2024 Audubon Great Lakes Chapter Gathering, we engaged 44 chapters.

AUDUBON GREAT LAKES HELPED ADVANCE FOUR RESPONSIBLY SITED RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS that will bring 1.76 GW of renewable energy to market (1 GW alone can power a medium-sized city or roughly 750,000 homes!). Our team ensured that projects mitigate and minimize threats to birds and their habitats. We worked with Vista Sands Solar to avoid impacts to the endangered Greater Prairie Chicken and, as a result, the developer committed \$2.1 million to the Wisconsin Greater Prairie-Chicken management plan.

Thank you for your partnership!

From backyard feeders to global migratory flyways, we are building a more biodiverse, climate-resilient environment for birds and people across the Americas.

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