



Audubon Southwest

2025
IMPACT
REPORT



 Audubon
SOUTHWEST

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.

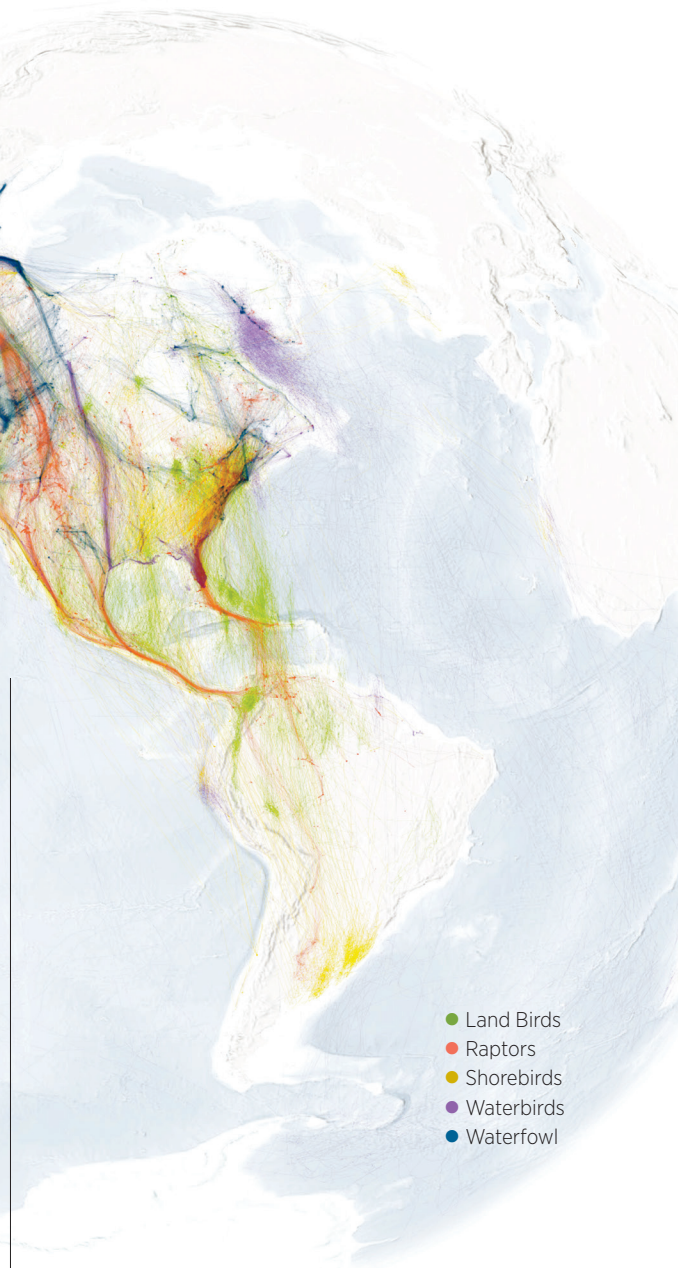
Together with partners and supporters like you, Audubon is achieving lasting conservation results across the hemisphere and here in the Southwest.

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,

JON HAYES
VICE PRESIDENT AND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AUDUBON SOUTHWEST



- Land Birds
- Raptors
- Shorebirds
- Waterbirds
- Waterfowl

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

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.



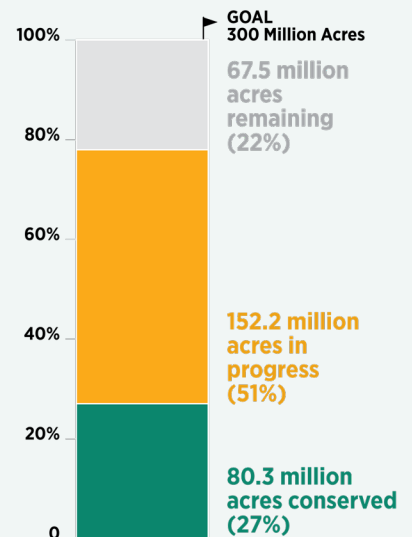
Seal River Watershed Indigenous Protected Area Initiative

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 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.



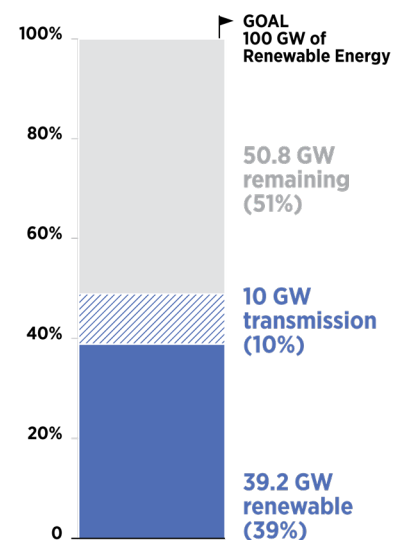
Wind turbines in the ocean off the coast of Block Island near Rhode Island.

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.
- We partnered with a solar project developer on a 1.3 GW project in Wisconsin to protect habitat of the Greater Prairie Chicken.
- 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.

PROGRESS TOWARD GOAL

As of July 1, 2025



NATURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

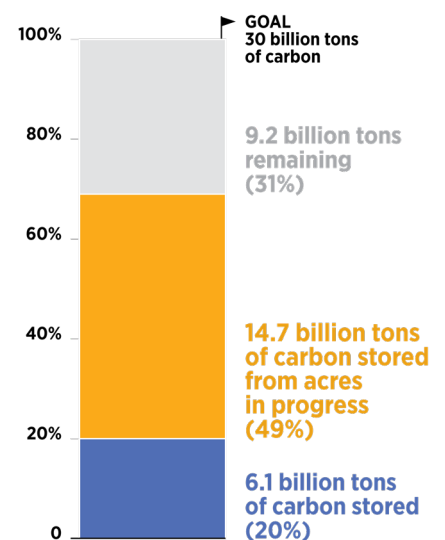
Audubon has sequestered and stored 6.1 billion tons of carbon, with another 14.7 billion tons expected from landscapes where lasting protection and restoration is already in motion, reflecting the powerful impact of conservation work underway today.

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

Southwest

Sandhill Crane
and Snow Geese

AUDUBON SOUTHWEST HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN OUR WORK TOWARDS AUDUBON'S FLIGHT PLAN MILESTONES. Over the past year we built a Working Lands Initiative able to address the most pressing issues facing declining grassland bird populations; helped secure sustainable water supplies for people and the environment; and played a lead role in modernizing the New Mexico Department of Wildlife.

Through this work, we are ensuring that birds like our beloved Sandhill Cranes have productive agricultural lands on which to forage, adequate water for their roosting habitats, and government agency and resource managers working to protect them. This all adds up to a stronger chance of migrating to the areas these cranes need to create and raise the next generation. In addition, this work helps the next generation of people in the Southwest live the way they want to live by providing access to wild places, abundant wildlife, and a secure water future.

Breathing new life into our struggling grasslands

With over 40 percent of the U.S. used for livestock grazing, livestock managers play an outsized role in managing North America's wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, while this acreage provides food, fiber, and fuel to our nation, we are witnessing a decline in the ability of grazed lands to support wildlife. In fact, grassland bird populations are declining more rapidly than any other group of birds in North America.

To address this loss, Audubon Southwest has launched our Wings Over Working Lands

Initiative to improve our grasslands and the future of grassland birds that depend on this land during the winter months. Through this innovative initiative, we will provide technical guidance and funding to ranchers interested in improving wildlife habitat on the land they manage. With \$1.5 million secured from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Rio Grande Joint Venture, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Audubon Southwest has built a team that will provide customized assistance to ranchers throughout New Mexico and Arizona.

Modernizing New Mexico's Top Agency for Wildlife Management

The agency responsible for regulating and managing the majority of New Mexico's wildlife, the New Mexico Department of Wildlife (formerly New Mexico Department of Game and Fish) is a key partner of Audubon Southwest. While agency staff and leadership are deeply committed to protecting and conserving wildlife, the agency itself has historically focused on managing game and fish, primarily for the benefit of hunters and anglers. While we support all responsible outdoor pursuits, we believe the agency should draw a better balance between non-consumptive wildlife uses and consumptive uses.

To that end, Audubon Southwest successfully led a coalition to reform the commission's structure to ensure greater professionalism, diversify perspectives, and clarify the agency's work on all non-federal trust species. The agency's name was updated to a new more inclusive one: the New Mexico Department of Wildlife. Additionally, we secured the funding required to support the non-game mission we are asking them to adopt. The result: a wildlife agency more capable of meeting the changing needs of New Mexicans now and in the future.

HIGHLIGHTS

Through Flight Plan, Audubon Southwest is influencing 18,823 acres. Below are 2025 highlights of the work behind the success.

WE SECURED FEDERAL AND CORPORATE INVESTMENTS TOTALING \$780,000 to support habitat restoration and water deliveries on the Rio Grande in New Mexico and the Lower Gila River in Arizona—work that will benefit birds, other wildlife, and people. In addition, we advocated for and secured over \$250,000,000 of public investment into water infrastructure and conservation in Arizona.



Rufous Hummingbird

THROUGH OUR POLICY AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS, Audubon volunteers took advocacy action over 5,400 times, which helped drive our success in securing the major water funding package in Arizona and passing the legislation modernizing the New Mexico Department of Wildlife.



Earth Day at the Nina Pulliam Rio Salado Center in Arizona



THROUGH WORK AT THE NINA MASON PULLIAM RIO SALADO AUDUBON CENTER, the Randall Davey Audubon Center, and the Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch, we engaged more than 10,000 people in our nature-based programming and 857 volunteers who contributed more than 2,876 volunteer hours, and we protected and stewarded 7,880 total acres across all three locations.



Sandhill Cranes

WE CREATED TWO BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE GUIDES to aid renewable energy developers in siting and designing projects in ways that mitigate harm to birds, and we secured approximately \$100,000 annually to co-lead partnership efforts to ensure that renewable energy siting and policies in New Mexico and Arizona mitigate harm to birds. Audubon Southwest will continue engaging directly with renewable energy development companies to advance our goal of balancing the needs of birds and people as we work to address climate change.

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.

CONTACT

Jon Hayes
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
jonathan.hayes@audubon.org

Suzy Santaella
DIRECTOR OF LEADERSHIP GIVING
suzy.santaella@audubon.org

Erika Flores
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
erika.flores@audubon.org

OFFICE

AUDUBON SOUTHWEST
PO Box 9314
Santa Fe, NM 87504



southwest@audubon.org



Photo credits Cover: Great Egret, Harry Collins/Audubon Photography Awards; Inside cover: Map, Bird Migration Explorer; Inset, Courtesy of Jon Hayes; p1: Jordan Melograna/Seal River Watershed Indigenous Protected Area Initiative; p2: Lauren Owens Lambert; p3: from top, Moriah Ratner; Sydney Walsh/Audubon; p4: Mike Cullivan/Audubon Photography Awards; p5: Clockwise from top right, Ash Ponders; Caroline Samson/Audubon Photography Awards; Christy Grinton/Audubon Photography Awards; Ash Ponders; Back cover: Common Yellowthroat, Timothy McNeal/Audubon Photography Awards.