

Creating A Culture Of Conservation



Birds are the foundation of the Audubon movement. They provide the basis for our conservation action, whether it is the protection of our wetland resources, stewardship of our Adirondack and Catskill forests, the cleanup of Long Island Sound and the Hudson River, or the creation of parklands in communities across New York state.

The National Audubon Society of New York State provided a blueprint for bird conservation in 1998 with the publication of the book, *Important Bird Areas in New York State*. As Audubon embarks upon its conservation action plan for the 21st century, our Important Bird Areas program remains our rudder and has taken us into dynamic and far-reaching waters. It touches all of our conservation and educational programs, whether fighting for open space dollars, promoting smart growth strategies for communities or launching Audubon Centers across the state.

The state of New York has embraced Audubon's habitat-based agenda for birds with its own Bird Conservation Area program. By the end of the summer, 15 Bird Conservation Areas will be designated on state lands with a dedicated funding stream to implement the program. Plans for education displays and programs at these sites are underway, as well as efforts to designate ten new sites over the next year.

In total, there are 50 to 75 potential Bird Conservation Areas on state lands ranging from the already designated Catskill High Peaks to nominated sites like the Bashakill Wildlife Area and Caumsett State Park. The most exciting aspect of these activities is that this bird conservation revolution and revelation goes far beyond the act of designation. It has transformed the way the state,

the conservation movement and, gradually, the public view their relationships to these lands.

The state of New York now fully considers bird conservation issues on these lands as they develop management plans. Whether it is research activities, recreational pursuits or educational programs, bird conservation themes are taken into consideration so everyone is a winner. Now, before the state adopts a 5 to 10-year management plan for a state park, state forest or state wildlife area, the question is asked: how can we achieve our objectives while at the same time respect the needs of the birds? Furthermore, this program opens the door to environmental education, providing a place-based experience, teaching all ages the wonders of birds and their habitats. This proactive approach to conservation planning enables the state to incorporate sound scientific habitat information into their stewardship actions, not only for birds but for all species.

The bottom line is that bird conservation is good conservation. It provides benefits for a diversity of wildlife and habitat types. This conservation tool is not a heavy hammer, but rather a subtle teacher helping us all see the possibilities of letting science guide our actions.

New York state has become a leader in bird conservation thanks to your dedication and support. The journey is far from over, but, oh, what a wonderful beginning it has been.

The National Audubon Society of New York State



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 MITSCHKA HARTLEY, Forest Ecologist
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 DAPHNE LUMPKIN, Administrative Assistant
 ERIC LIND, Director, Constitution Marsh Sanctuary (CMS)
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 JONATHAN TEYAN, Assistant Director, TRS
 PATRICIA PELKOWSKI, Research Coordinator, TRS
 SUE NAPODANO, Program Coordinator, TRS
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Audubon State Council Resolutions 2000

GENERAL

Conservation resolutions adopted by the Audubon State Council are:

- ✓ Support of the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act and its implementation, including citizen input, and following existing management plans to ensure success;
- ✓ Support continued funding of the Environmental Protection Fund of at least \$125 million a year and support creation of new revenue sources for the EPF in future years;
- ✓ Support for citizen suit legislation empowering citizens to pursue legal action against polluters;
- ✓ Support the revitalization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund with equitable state and federal funding and without incentives for increased offshore oil leases, and also support funding for wildlife and coastal restoration programs beyond the \$900 million mandated in the LWCF;
- ✓ Support smart growth legislation and executive action as well as bring together all interests to make smart growth work for the future quality of life for all New Yorkers.

BIRD CONSERVATION

Resolutions adopted by the Audubon State Council relating to bird conservation are:

- ✓ Support Audubon's Important Bird Areas program and continued implementation of the State Bird Conservation Area Law, including appropriate IBAs in the state open space conservation plan;
- ✓ Support additional land protection programs for Montezuma Wetlands Refuge in Central New York and designation by the state as a BCA;
- ✓ Support transfer of Galeville Army Base to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a new wildlife refuge, the Shawangunk Grasslands Wildlife Refuge;
- ✓ Support the conservation plan for the Niagara River Corridor as a globally recognized Important Bird Area.

