

# Conservation in a changing climate

Bold investments in the health of our land and waters and smart planning for climate change can make a difference for birds and people

## Policy Priorities

In 2023, Audubon seeks to advance climate-smart land-use planning, Puget Sound recovery and resilience, and shrub-steppe protection and stewardship. We also support an ambitious \$47.6M funding request by the Washington Department of Wildlife for biodiversity conservation that will have wide-ranging benefits across our state.

### CLIMATE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Policies that drive smart planning for climate change, invest in comprehensive climate solutions, and promote responsible siting of clean energy are needed to ensure that Washington communities are prepared for climate change. Audubon urges lawmakers to:

- Update the Growth Management Act and Shoreline Master Plans to include climate resilience. Critically, this update would require local jurisdictions to address sea level rise.
- Ensure that revenue from the Climate Commitment Act goes towards climate solutions.
- Pass policies that incentivize clean energy in “preferred sites,” as defined in state law.

### COASTAL CONSERVATION

Programs that support the protection and restoration of Puget Sound shorelines and estuaries are crucial for recovering birds, orcas, and salmon. Decades of hard armoring has degraded shoreline habitat, yet there is no comprehensive inventory of the extent and location. Creation of a shoreline assessment program will provide data on the location of shoreline armor and status of shoreline conditions. This information is needed to assess progress on Puget Sound recovery goals, assist in permitting compliance, and inform the selection of mitigation and restoration sites.



### SAGELANDS STEWARDSHIP

Protecting and enhancing Washington’s remaining shrub-steppe, home to imperiled bird species, cannot be accomplished without the help of private landowners. \$1.5M in funding is needed for wildlife-friendly fences and will benefit birds and ranchers. Audubon also supports an additional \$10M in funding for conservation districts, which will enable them to expand their support of private landowner voluntary stewardship activities through Conservation Technical Assistance.

### FUNDING FOR BIODIVERSITY

Washington is experiencing significant losses of biodiversity from habitat loss and climate change, but WDFW lacks the resources to implement conservation for 95% of affected species. Our experience shows that with adequate funding and public-private collaboration, we can make a difference for birds and wildlife and avoid regulatory burdens. We support the Department’s \$47.6 M request for biodiversity conservation and \$3.8 M request for climate resilience.