

# Audubon Washington Impact Report 2022



Downy Woodpecker.




# *Thank you for your support.*

Thank you for your support in 2022. With your help, we are securing the future for birds at risk through science, education, advocacy, and on-the-ground conservation. You are our flock!

This report reflects your impact across every area of our work, including:

- Advances in avian science in Puget Sound;
- Launch of a least-conflict solar siting project;
- Funding for fire resilience and restoration in the Columbia Plateau; and
- Expanding the reach of our nature and conservation education programs.

*Thank you,  
Audubon Washington team.*



American Coot and  
Northern Shoveler.

# Introduction



Ferruginous  
Hawk.



Northern  
Shoveler.



Black  
Oystercatcher.

As 2022 closes, Audubon Washington is looking back on a year of progress. I am proud of what we've achieved and grateful for all those who have stood with us: donors, partners, ambassadors, and friends. Your care for birds and the places they need, now and in the future, inspires and invigorates our work.

On Earth Day, President Biden visited Seward Park — home to our Seward Park Audubon Center, and to an old-growth forest in a startlingly urban setting — to sign his Executive Order on Forests. It was a reminder of what a unique privilege and a great responsibility it is to live in Washington and work toward a sustainable future for birds and people.

Birds today face unprecedented threats, climate change most acute and urgent among them. We live every day with an awareness that great losses lie ahead if we don't act

quickly. As the National Audubon Society expands throughout the hemisphere to meet this challenge, Audubon Washington is doubling down for birds here and everywhere.

2022 was a year of steady progress, with both immediate gains and momentum building toward the 2023 legislative session. Audubon Washington helped pass a bill creating a low-income incentive program for solar energy, paving the way for solar to reach vulnerable communities. We won additional funding for the Sustainable Farms and Field program and helped pass the Outdoor Education for All bill, expanding outdoor learning for grade-school children.

We also celebrated the launch of the Least-Conflict Solar Siting project and the launch of the national Migratory Bird Explorer, a first-of-its-kind digital platform that brings

bird migration to life — and into the hands of conservationists. And we continue to lead Washington in bird conservation in both Puget Sound and Eastern Washington.

I'm delighted to share this year's impact report, highlighting progress across our Coasts, Climate, Sagelands, and Bird-Friendly Communities programs. Your support is essential to everything we do — for birds in Washington and across the hemisphere.

Sincerely,

**Deborah B. Jensen, Ph.D.**

Vice President and Executive Director,  
Audubon Washington



## Coasts

### *Conservation Led by Science*

This year, we deepened relationships with nonprofit, tribal, and government partners, using effective conservation science and collaboration to better understand the unique needs of birds in the region. Together, we developed crucial transboundary avian research and monitoring to advance our scientific knowledge of coastal bird conservation.

Last year with the Stillaguamish Tribe, we received funding to lead the development of a regional monitoring framework for avian monitoring in Salish Sea estuaries, which will deliver much-needed science support to local monitoring practitioners in the coming year. We also continued our coordination of the the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program Marine Birds Work Group, which brings together research, monitoring, and conservation practitioners from across borders and sectors to collaborate on shared interests in avian management and conservation. With topics ranging from remote wildlife tracking to forage fish management, our group is tackling some of the most important issues facing coastal birds.

With our US and Canadian partners, we secured funding and kicked off a project to understand transboundary mechanisms driving the decline of sea duck populations in the Salish Sea, which supports globally significant numbers of wintering sea duck species. Led by Birds Canada, this project is convening scientists, managers, and others to address data and information barriers that prevent us from pursuing effective transboundary conservation strategies for sea ducks.

### *Protecting Key Habitats*

The Kennedy Creek and Skookum Inlet are Important Bird Areas for tens of thousands of wintering shorebirds and waterfowl. Located at the mouth of the Totten Inlet near Olympia, portions of the estuary and Skookum Inlet are protected, but Highway 101 cuts across the Creek's mouth, potentially hampering the natural functioning of the delta. We are leading a coalition of local stakeholders to explore the significance of the problem, identify potential solutions, and raise public understanding and support for habitat restoration and enhancement in the area.

### *Advancing Shoreline Protection*

Audubon Washington laid the groundwork and acted as a watchdog for local and state policies to protect coastal birds on two fronts: shoreline protection and sea level rise. Audubon Senior Program Manager for Puget Sound Scott Andrews worked with local coalition partners to urge the Skagit County Board of Commissioners to address sea level rise in the County's Shoreline Master Plan, which they have indicated they will do in a future amendment. At the state level, we called on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to consider sea level rise in their approval of shoreline armoring replacement projects, which they plan to address in 2023.

While our priority bill to establish a comprehensive inventory of the extent of shoreline armoring and other structures along the Puget Sound coastline did not make it across the finish line, we will continue to advocate for habitat recovery in the Sound and aim to pass last year's Sound-wide shoreline survey bill during the 2023 legislative session.



Surf Scoter.



## Climate

### *Advocating for Climate, Birds, and Communities*

Following the science, Audubon Washington has doubled down on our efforts to advance policies and actions that reduce our climate impact, while supporting the birds and communities who are most at risk.

This year's legislative session presented several opportunities for us push forward climate-friendly action. Our annual Advocacy Day brought over 50 members across the state to meet with legislators to share their support for climate-friendly bills.

The state's low-income solar incentive program passed with our support, bringing the benefits of solar energy to vulnerable communities while protecting birds from solar development.

We continued our advocacy to update the Growth Management Act to include planning for climate resilience.

With tremendous growth in solar projects in the state, we successfully secured additional funding for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife so the department has the capacity to efficiently review every solar project proposal for their impacts on wildlife and habitats.



Black-capped Chickadee with solar panels.





Shrub-steppe habitat in eastern Washington.

## Sagelands

### *Developing Critical Research and Tools*

After six years, 285 volunteers, 14,000 volunteer hours, and 987 individual surveys, Audubon Washington released the final [Sagebrush Songbird Survey report findings](#). This community science project helped build new species distribution models for songbirds that rely on sagebrush habitat in Washington, like Sagebrush Sparrows and Sage Thrashers. Designed by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and implemented by trained Audubon volunteers, this survey filled a critical gap in our knowledge of sagebrush songbird distributions in Washington, providing crucial information to inform priority areas for avian and sagebrush ecosystem conservation.

This year, staff developed a Clean Energy Screening Tool to empower chapters to engage on local solar projects, identifying potential conflicts with birds, shrub-steppe habitat, landscape connectivity, and prime agricultural areas. With it, members and staff are better prepared to engage with authorities and developers as early in the permitting process as possible. The Sagebrush Songbird Survey findings release coincided nicely with the Audubon's development of the tool, with data from the Sagebrush Songbird Survey being used in the tool.

### *Meeting Clean Energy Needs, Responsibly*

Audubon's science and clean energy advocacy continue to prove integral when it comes to ensuring bird and community friendly clean energy projects in the state. This summer,

staff toured two of the proposed clean energy project sites: Badger Mountain in east Wenatchee and Horse Heaven Clean Energy in the Tri-cities. We are working closely with local chapters and partners to offer science-based comments for both projects' upcoming Draft Environmental Impact Statements, offering recommendations to avoid impacts to birds at both locations.

This fall, Audubon Washington—represented by Director of Bird Conservation Trina Bayard—joined the Least-Conflict Solar Siting Project for the Columbia Plateau. This collaborative process, facilitated by Washington State University and the Conservation Biology Institute, invites stakeholders like Audubon to weigh in on the most important species and places for protection, with the goal of identifying least-conflict areas for utility-scale solar development.



## Bird-Friendly Communities

### *Seward Park Audubon Center Connects the Community to Nature*

The Seward Park Audubon Center is a treasured community hub that serves the diverse southeast Seattle neighborhood. The Center's education courses offer learners young and old immersive outdoor experiences that foster environmental stewardship.

In-person programming is back in full swing, and more people are attending our programs than ever before. Serving as a valued partner connecting communities of color with the outdoors, the Center enjoyed welcoming groups including Outdoor Afro, Latino Outdoors, The Mission Continues, and Veteran Rites.

The Center continues to find new opportunities to remove barriers so people of all physical abilities can access the outdoors. This year, Center Director Joey Manson, introduced [wifi binoculars](#) to bring difficult-to-view elements of the natural world to iPad screens, adding a new option to existing wheelchair-friendly trails and accessible parking at trailheads.

The Center is also a resource for research. For example, Naturalist Ed Dominguez is collaborating with Bats Northwest, Woodland Park Zoo, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife on bat surveys and urban carnivore studies.

### *An Engaged and Growing Network for Conservation*

Audubon Washington's robust 25-chapter network and volunteers are the foundation to our conservation efforts.

Earlier in the spring, we held our virtual regional chapter meetings, with all chapters seeing growth in membership, programming, and capacity. To keep us connected, Chapter Network Manager Teri Anderson shared a monthly newsletter and initiated monthly "birds of a feather" calls to help share lessons learned across the network.

This fall, we held a statewide gathering, the Audubon Council of Washington, our first in-person chapter conference since 2019. We met at the newly renovated Dungeness Nature Center in Sequim, a partnership between the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Audubon Washington, and the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society. We covered key conservation challenges around Washington, met with legislators, were inspired by Seattle author Lyanda Lynn Haupt, saw a preview of the new Migratory Bird Explorer, and enjoyed each others' company.



Ed Dominguez zooms in on birds in Seward Park's Magnificent Forest.



Lucas Hanson witnesses forest birds in real-time using an iPad.



# With Gratitude

As a supporter of Audubon Washington, you are part of a rapidly amplifying national voice — a voice calling out with ever-greater urgency to protect birds and the habitats they need. Your consistent and active care are an enormous opportunity for birds and humans alike. Without your support, we could not do our essential work, for birds, for humans, and for a better climate future for all.

*Thank you.*



Greater Yellowlegs.

## Our Office

### **Audubon Washington**

5902 Lake Washington Blvd S  
Seattle, WA 98118

## Our Staff

### **Deborah Jensen Ph.D.**

Vice President and Executive Director  
of Audubon Washington

### **Teri Anderson**

Chapter Network Manager

### **Scott Andrews**

Senior Puget Sound Program Manager

### **Trina Bayard**

Director of Bird Conservation

### **Ed Dominguez**

Seward Park Naturalist

### **Joey Manson**

Seward Park Audubon Center Director

### **Adam Maxwell**

Senior Policy Manager

**Photography Credits:** (Cover) Michele Black/Great Backyard Bird Count; (2) Evan Barrientos/Audubon Rockies; (3) Shlomo Neuman/Audubon Photography Awards; Ed MacKerrow/Audubon Photography Awards; Ron Horn/Audubon Photography Awards; (4) Eric Reuter/Great Backyard Bird Count; (5) Paul Woolley/Audubon Washington; (6) Courtesy of: Dave Showalter; (7) Photos from the left: Jovelle Tamayo/Audubon; Jovelle Tamayo/Audubon; (8) Kevin Rutherford/Audubon Photography Awards