

Mid-Atlantic Goals & Strategies

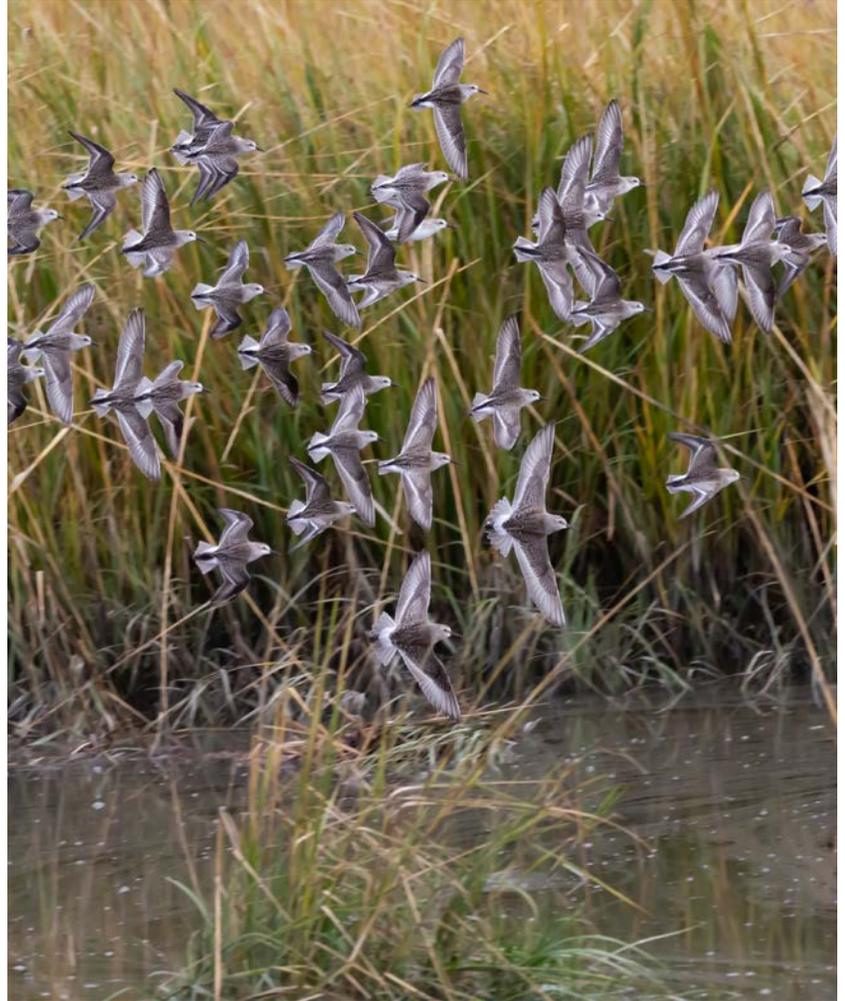
2023–2030



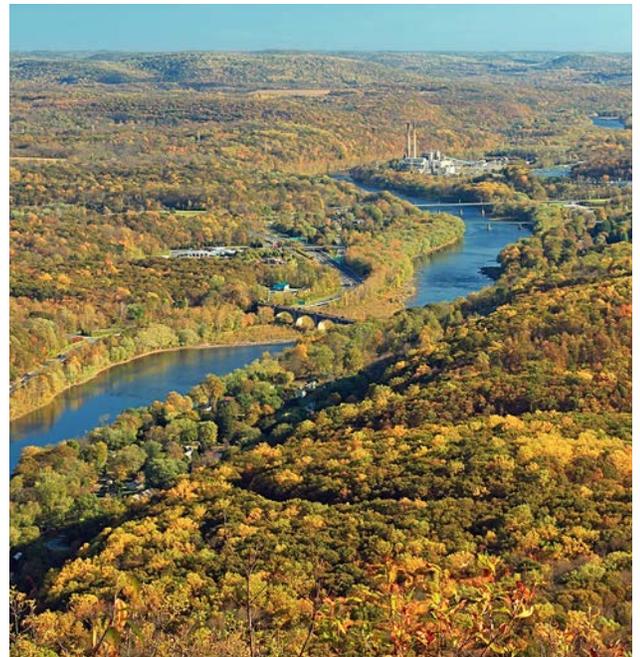
Audubon | MID-ATLANTIC

Contents

- 1 Audubon Mid-Atlantic (AMA) Values
- 2 Overview
- 4 Core Approaches
- 6 Goals and Strategies:
 - Coasts
 - Delaware River Watershed
 - Forests
 - Urban & Suburban
 - Climate & Renewable Energy
- 16 Vision



Clockwise from top right: Semipalmated Sandpiper and White-rumped Sandpiper; the Delaware River Valley as seen from the Appalachian Trail; Cerulean Warbler; Susquehanna River.





Audubon Mid-Atlantic Values

We are united by birds. Birds center our conservation work and are the lens through which we define, align, and focus our shared efforts and enthusiasm. While our mission and vision empower us to be purposeful and focused, our values serve as guideposts, shaping our individual and collective attitudes and behaviors, and aligning us around a set of standards for how we engage with each other, our partners, and our internal and external-facing work.

Participants bird at FDR Park, led by Keith Russell, Program Manager for Urban Conservation, center right, during Audubon Mid-Atlantic's inaugural Philly Birding Weekend in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October, 2022.

AUDUBON MID-ATLANTIC UPHOLDS THE FOLLOWING CORE VALUES:

We are driven to action

because of our deep understanding of the environmental and social challenges faced by birds and people on this planet.

We recognize our collective power.

Therefore, we acknowledge and face the realities of our work, and we are honest and transparent in our information sharing, even when this requires us to address difficult or sensitive subject matters.

We broaden our reach.

By intentionally making space for communities that have historically been excluded from environmental conversations, we invite and recognize the valuable voices, strengths, and leadership that these communities can and do contribute to our shared goals

We listen actively with the intent of understanding different perspectives and finding common ground.

We prioritize deliberate teaming and partnerships.

We believe in building community and relying on others because a team can accomplish more than an individual can alone. We believe it is important to invite the communities we aim to serve into our work.

We engage in intentional dialogue

where we share stories with and solicit stories from our peers, partners, and allies. These exchanges support us as we amplify and demonstrate the value of environmental efforts, cultivate meaningful relationships, and deepen the effectiveness of our work.

Mid-Atlantic Overview

Each spring and fall, millions of birds use Pennsylvania and Maryland's forests, rivers, coasts, marshes and cities as temporary homes on their hemispheric migratory journeys. Here they find the food and shelter they need to sustain them on their long flights. For many additional bird species, the Mid-Atlantic region is where their lives begin and some of them may never leave.



Baltimore Oriole

To see the region as a bird does is to understand more fully how its ecosystems and habitats connect to one another and how they are all needed to help birds thrive and survive.

From dense forests in northeast Pennsylvania, down through valleys formed by wind and water, crossing major cities and reaching coastal marshes and sand islands, the Mid-Atlantic region contains diverse and complex landscapes. But changes in our climate and loss of biodiverse open spaces are threatening the lives of birds—many species that rely upon our region have experienced significant population declines in recent decades.

In 2022, Audubon Mid-Atlantic staff asked ourselves how we want the region to be different over the next decade because of our work on behalf of birds. We used the drivers of the National Audubon Society—combatting the impact of climate change and supporting hemispheric migration while fostering equity and welcoming more voices into Audubon—as the foundation on which we built our plan. We sought input from our external partners and chapter leadership and we have reviewed data and research reports. We asked ourselves how we might most have an impact in encouraging renewable energy usage in order to lower greenhouse gas emissions while building more resilient bird habitats in the focal areas of saltwater coasts and marshes; Pennsylvania’s forests; watersheds (starting with the Delaware River), and the cities of Baltimore and Philadelphia. And we considered Audubon’s organizational strengths: an unbiased, scientific approach; a bird-centric lens; a strong and diverse network of bird champions.

Ultimately, we seek nothing less than to slow down and mitigate the devastating impact that climate change and habitat loss have had on birds.

And we envision a Mid-Atlantic region of healthy and resilient ecosystems where birds thrive and where all people have access to nature and a voice in environmental stewardship.

Our success will rely on the hundreds of thousands of regional residents who seek inspiration when they look to the skies on fall evenings, who feel joy when familiar birds return to their yards in the spring, who find solace in the calls of birds they first heard as children and who work to conserve and restore important ecosystems.

Thank you for your support of Audubon Mid-Atlantic’s important work.

THE MID-ATLANTIC STATES

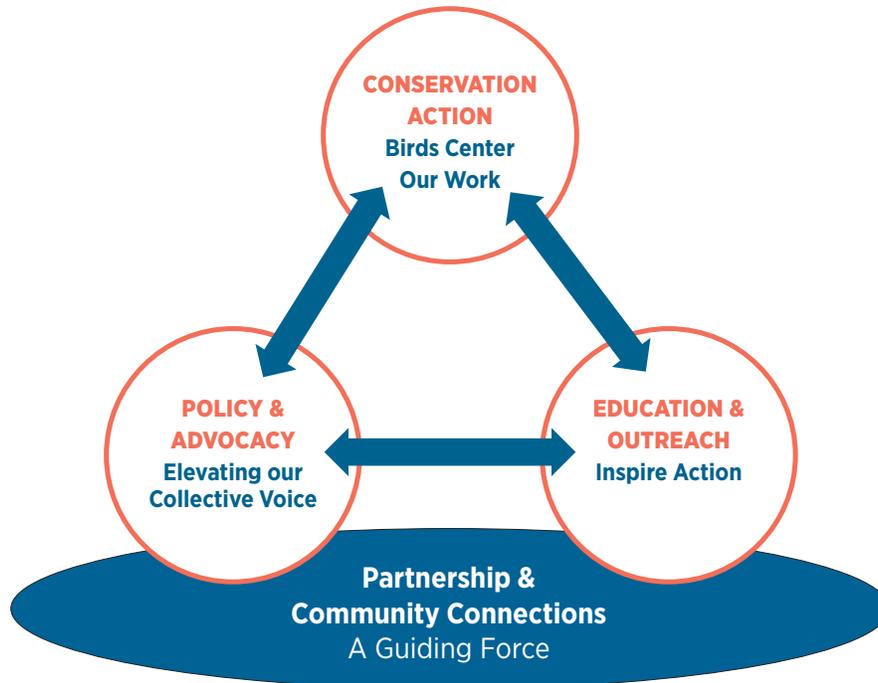


Core Approaches

Audubon Mid-Atlantic will deploy policy, conservation, and education/engagement activities in service of our goals. This virtuous cycle will allow us to achieve the systems-level change we seek. We will also continue to prioritize work with partners knowing that our efforts have a greater likelihood of success when we work toward common climate and habitat protection goals.



Audubon staff-led bird walk at The Discovery Center, Philadelphia.



CONSERVATION ACTION:
Birds Center our Work

Our mission calls us to protect bird populations and the places they need throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. We aim to reverse regional bird population declines by protecting, creating, and enhancing breeding and migratory habitats using a full-life-cycle conservation approach. We use the best available science to create conservation strategies that address the threats of climate change and habitat loss on birds within forests, saltwater coasts and marshes, watersheds, and urban ecosystems. We seek measurable, landscape-level change, using innovative partner-based solutions and market-incentives to extend our reach and sustain ecosystems that support birds and people. We understand that when we take care of birds, we help to ensure their survival and our own.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH:
Inspire Action

Every day and in every way, we engage people in conversations and robust learning experiences about the importance of birds and the ecosystems on which they depend. These exchanges may happen in a forest stand, along a shoreline, on a paved sidewalk, or in one of our environmental centers. We create and share accessible (and increasingly multi-lingual) information about birds, the threats that they face, and what they need to survive. The content we create and deliver includes formal training workshops, educational websites, inspiring articles, interpretive signs, social media materials, and legislative testimony. We also listen to what others in our community teach us. When we create welcoming places and tools for learning, the community of those who take action on behalf of birds expands significantly.

POLICY & ADVOCACY:
Elevating Our Collective Voice

We seek to reverse decades of environmental degradation by raising our collective voice on behalf of birds and the habitats that they need to survive. Using data and science, Audubon Mid-Atlantic responds to the impact that climate change, pollution and poorly-planned development has had on birds and the places we share with them. Our advocacy efforts highlight the connections between current laws and regulations and steep declines in bird populations. We work with Audubon chapters, members, and all who love birds to educate policy makers at the local, state, regional and federal levels about the need for new policies and public investments that will bring healthy ecosystems back and prepare us to mitigate a changing climate through natural infrastructure solutions and investments in renewable energy. Birds tells us that this work cannot wait.

PARTNERSHIP & COMMUNITY CONNECTION:
A Guiding Force

It takes many organizations, working on complementary strategies to protect the ecosystems that birds need to support them during their full annual cycles. Audubon Mid-Atlantic proactively fosters new and existing relationships by engaging individuals, communities, agencies, industries, and non-profit organizations to define our shared goals and take action on behalf of birds. Audubon brings science-based approaches, passion, humility, and organized networks to diverse partnerships that seek to improve the world for birds and people. Our partners, coming from varied educational, social, economic, gender, cultural, racial and ethnic, and political backgrounds, provide their own strengths, resulting in synergy for biologically-meaningful change.

GOAL

Maintain sufficient salt marsh and sand island habitat to ensure the long-term persistence of birds such as the Saltmarsh Sparrow, Black Rail, Royal Tern and Black Skimmer as nesting species in the Mid-Atlantic region in the face of climate-driven sea level rise, and to safeguard the region’s concentrations of migratory shorebirds.

Coasts

The Mid-Atlantic coastal zone is an ecological treasure. Its salt marshes, which have the appearance of vast intertidal prairies, play a critical role in protecting coastal communities from storms and supporting fisheries, as well as hosting an assemblage of birds found nowhere else, including two birds at risk of extinction, Saltmarsh Sparrow and Eastern Black Rail.



Saltmarsh Sparrow

The region’s beaches and sand islands also support nesting colonies of terns and Black Skimmers, whose buoyant flight and dramatic fishing behavior are iconic.

Yet these coastal habitats and the birds they support face the existential threat of climate-driven sea level rise. The latest sea level rise models for Maryland predict the almost total loss of today’s salt marshes by 2100. This erosion process is already well underway at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and throughout the Maryland Coastal Bays.

Sea level rise and increased storm events have also caused coastal sand islands to erode and disappear, eliminating nesting sites for colonial waterbirds such as the Royal Tern, Common Tern and Black Skimmer. All three of these species have declined by more than 90% in Maryland since the 1980s, and in recent years Royal Terns and Black Skimmers have not nested successfully in the state.

In the Delaware Bay, more than a million migratory shorebirds, including the rufa subspecies of Red Knot, congregate each spring to feast on horseshoe crab eggs in order to fuel their northward migration from South America to Arctic breeding grounds.

Maryland's Salt Marshes

→ Protect and restore 6,000 acres of high-quality salt marsh to provide core breeding habitat for Saltmarsh Sparrow and other salt marsh-dependent birds.

STRATEGY | Implement natural infrastructure projects at scale to restore and maintain salt marsh habitats threatened by sea level rise and critical to Saltmarsh Sparrow and other salt marsh-dependent birds. Audubon

has a proven track record in salt marsh restoration, as a founding member of the Blackwater 2100 partnership. Now, Audubon is working with public and private partner groups within the Delmarva Restoration and Conservation Network to create a Restoration and Resilience Plan to rapidly scale up salt marsh restoration in high marsh habitat critical for Saltmarsh Sparrow and other salt marsh birds.

STRATEGY | Increase public funding and streamline the regulatory review process for natural infrastructure projects designed to mitigate the impact of sea level rise on Maryland's salt marsh habitats. Audubon's Restoration and Resilience Plan will build the case for a large-scale restoration effort that uses natural infrastructure to build back the marshes in ways that will make them more resilient to rising sea levels. It will not be possible to save all, or even most, of our salt marshes. And major investments will be needed to maintain just the highest priority sites.



Black Skimmer



Terns take flight from the nesting platform off the coast of Maryland.

Maryland Coastal Bay's Sand Islands

→ Recover populations of Common Tern, Royal Tern and Black Skimmer to 1980s levels, by restoring at least four natural sand nesting islands in Maryland's Coastal Bays, including Skimmer Island.

STRATEGY | Deploy artificial nesting platforms for terns and skimmers in Maryland's Coastal Bays. Beginning in 2021, Audubon and partners built and deployed a wooden nesting platform in the Maryland Coastal Bays. Common Terns colonized the raft, which held 155 nests in 2022, making it the second largest Common Tern colony in Maryland. AMA will continue and expand this effort in order to increase the tern population and also provide artificial nesting sites for Black Skimmers. However, these artificial structures cannot sufficiently replace the island habitat that has been lost to erosion and AMA will work on more comprehensive solutions (see below).

STRATEGY | Create and then implement a dredged sand management agreement designed to restore and maintain Coastal Bay nesting islands and increase federal and state funding for regular restoration work.

The best long-term solution to the loss of nesting islands is a natural infrastructure approach that not only restores these sites but also maintains them into the

future. AMA and a broad spectrum of partners and stakeholders will therefore work to develop a sand management agreement for Maryland's Coastal Bays. This agreement will ensure that a number of targeted islands are rebuilt and maintained periodically with dredged ocean sand. These islands will provide alternative nesting sites for terns and skimmers in the event of catastrophic disturbances (an ever-present threat to colonial waterbirds such as these).

Delaware Bay Migratory Shorebirds

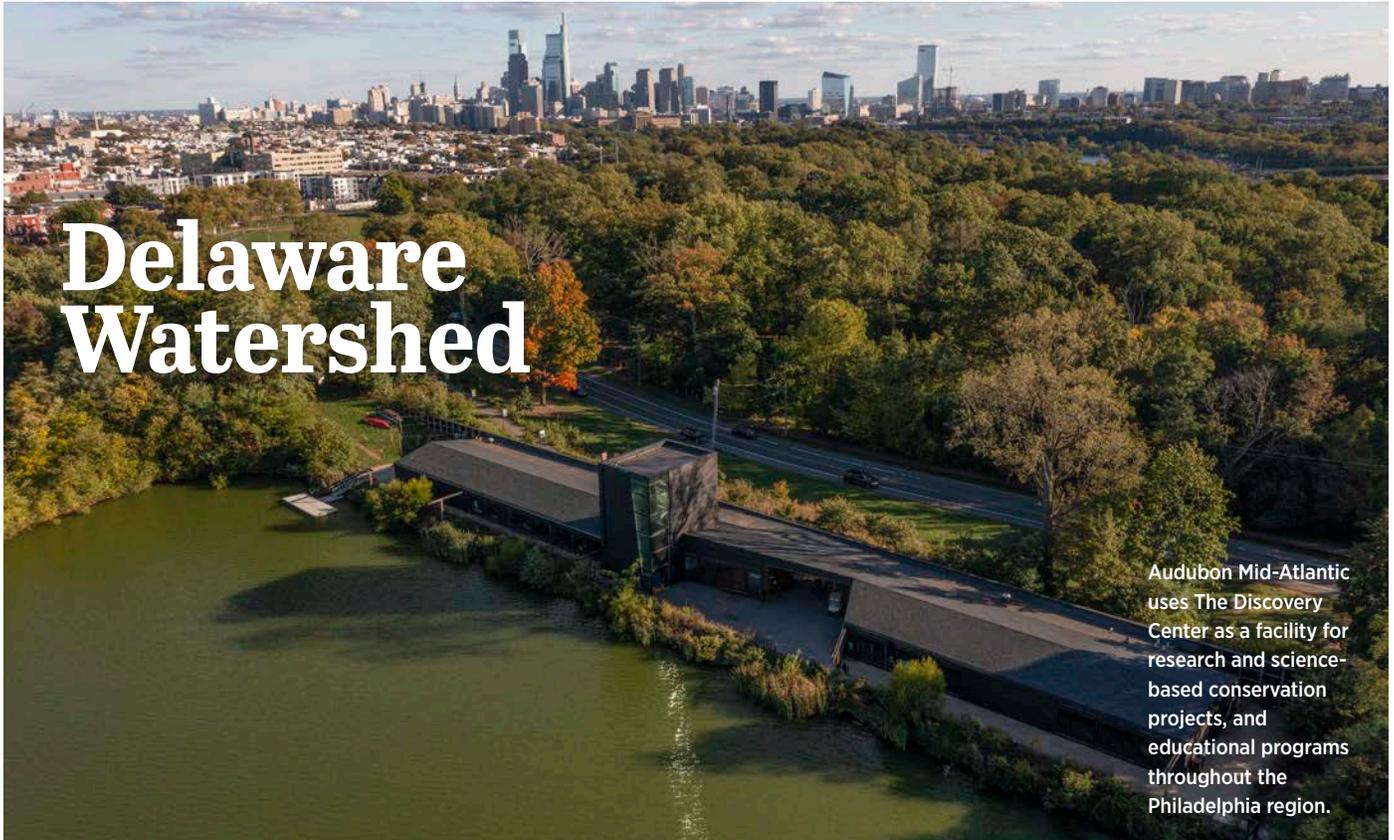
→ The Delaware coast supports the horseshoe crab population needed for Red Knots and other migratory shorebirds to fuel their annual migration to their Arctic breeding grounds.

STRATEGY | Use policy and regulatory levers to decrease the number of horseshoe crabs harvested each year.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic will work in partnership with coastal conservation staff within the Atlantic Flyway and at National Audubon Society and the Delaware Audubon Society to increase the availability of horseshoe crab eggs on Delaware beaches through policy and education efforts designed to reduce the harvest of horseshoe crabs for bait and for bleeding by pharmaceutical companies.

GOAL

Maintain or improve water quality in and along the Delaware River and its tributaries so that the watershed remains a supportive migratory corridor and nesting grounds for millions of birds.



Audubon Mid-Atlantic uses The Discovery Center as a facility for research and science-based conservation projects, and educational programs throughout the Philadelphia region.

The Delaware River Watershed is a complex system of forests, rivers, marshes and urban landscapes of approximately 13,500 square miles and 2,000 rivers across four states and provides drinking water to more than 13 million people.

It is also a critical habitat for birds, including the Belted Kingfisher, Ruddy Duck, Wood Thrush (breeding) and Black-throated, Cerulean and Golden-winged warblers (breeding). But the Watershed continues to lose quality habitat needed to support migratory and breeding birds as a result of landcover changes due to urbanization and the impact of climate change. Yet land preservation, conservation, and restoration efforts and public funding to support these efforts remain anemic. Over time, we will seek to grow our staff capacity to

address the bird habitat needs fully in the Delaware watershed.

Note: AMA recognizes the importance of the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay Watersheds (and their connectivity to one another) within the region. Our Baltimore conservation work (see page 12-13) will seek to address stormwater runoff into the Chesapeake Bay. And, over time, we will seek to grow our staff capacity to address the bird habitat needs fully in the Susquehanna watershed.

Riparian Restoration

→ In collaboration with partner organizations, Audubon Mid-Atlantic will enhance and/or widen 45 acres of riparian habitat along the Delaware River and its tributaries.

STRATEGY | Support bird-friendly riparian restoration and conservation work on private and public land. Audubon will continue to work with partner organizations to identify and develop bird-friendly demonstration sites along degraded streambanks in Watershed sections that are particularly critical to migratory birds including Wood Thrush and warblers. We will also continue to work in targeted areas within the Schuylkill Highlands to engage private landowners in riparian restoration work through a foundation-funded plant and tree distribution project. Finally, Audubon will explore the ability for AMA to become a mitigation sponsor (aka mitigation banker).

STRATEGY | Create demonstration projects at Audubon’s Southeastern Pennsylvania Centers. Audubon will create at least two watershed restoration demonstration projects at the John James Audubon Center (Montgomery County), which abuts the Perkiomen Creek, and one at the Discovery Center’s reservoir (Philadelphia). These projects will enhance riparian habitat using natural infrastructure methods and educate visitors about the need for more healthy riparian buffers to create cleaner water.



Wood Thrush

Reduce Habitat Fragmentation in Urban and Suburban Communities

→ Increase continuous riparian buffer zones along the most affected urban/suburban basins within the Delaware River Watershed by ten acres.

STRATEGY | Create public biodiverse habitats in flood-prone city neighborhoods. Audubon Mid-Atlantic will continue to work with partners to finish the Philadelphia Pollinator Corridor project, which creates biodiverse habitats designed to soak up stormwater in flood-prone southwest Philadelphia. In these gardens and in Philadelphia’s Whitby Meadow (Cobbs Creek Park), which Audubon Mid-Atlantic will continue to restore, staff will develop a maintenance plan. Over time, Audubon staff will also develop comprehensive conservation and policy strategies for municipalities/cities such as Philadelphia, Chester, Reading, Allentown and Norristown, which lie within the watershed. In addition to reducing runoff to the Delaware River and its tributaries, these strategies will also seek to increase residents’ access to biodiverse public spaces, helping Audubon meet one of its Urban ecosystem goals (see page 12-13).

THE DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED



Public Investments

→ Reauthorize the federal Delaware River Basin Restoration program through 2030 and increase annual federal and state appropriations for Watershed restoration and conservation projects by 5%.

STRATEGY | Build awareness of the Watershed’s importance and needs within the Audubon Mid-Atlantic network. Working with partners within the Watershed, Audubon will engage watershed-based chapter members and other grassroots constituents to actively support an increase in public investments in Delaware River Watershed conservation and restoration work and the enactment of land use policies designed to protect critical bird habitats throughout the Watershed. At Audubon’s two southeastern Pennsylvania environmental centers—John James Audubon Center and the Discovery Center—public programs will explore the importance of the Watershed, and educate audiences about action steps that they can take to improve riparian habitat and water quality.

GOAL

Improve forest health to levels needed to stabilize and reverse forest-bird population declines and preserve the integrity of ecosystem services, while also maintaining people's access to recreational opportunities and ensuring societal demands for forest products are met.

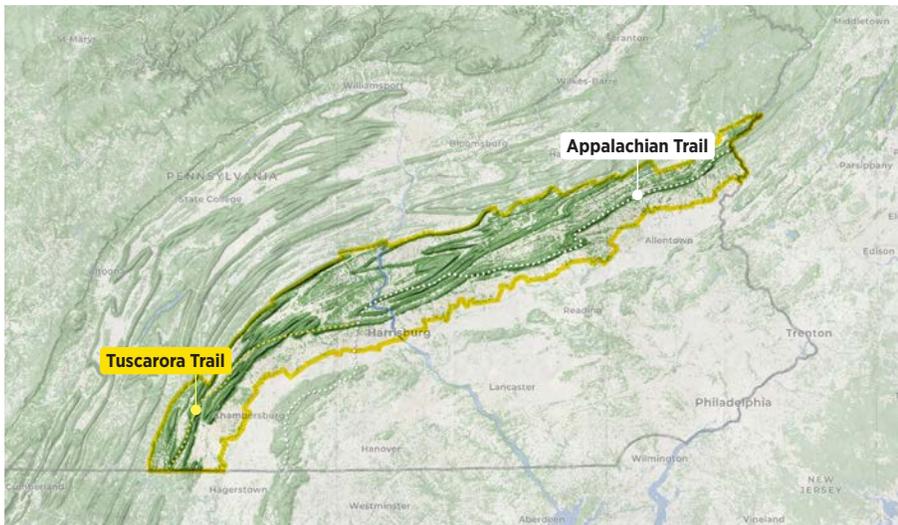


Forests are a key feature of the Mid-Atlantic, occupying over 19.3 million acres of the region. Forests not only provide important breeding habitat for many bird species but play a key role in migration and support many resident and irruptive species in winter.

Forests also provide clean water, industry, and recreation to humans and form one of the best natural infrastructure solutions to combating climate change through carbon sequestration. With more than 70% of forests privately owned in the Mid-Atlantic, this habitat type provides a unique opportunity for engaging the public in bird conservation.

Forest health, along with the habitats on which birds depend, is being lost and degraded due to human development, a legacy of poor management, invasive plants/insects, over-browsing by white-tailed deer, and climate change. Along the Kittatinny Ridge, for example, populations of Cerulean Warblers have decreased by more than 65% since the 1970s.

KITTATINNY RIDGE CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE (KRCL)



Breeding Birds

→ Strategically protect and conserve forest bird breeding habitat in the AMA region to support a 10% increase in Golden-winged Warbler and to stabilize regional Wood Thrush and Cerulean Warbler populations.

STRATEGY | Grow Audubon's Healthy Forest program to reach 60% of private and public foresters, expanding its work across the Mid-Atlantic region.

Audubon staff will continue to conduct trainings in healthy forest management to foresters, focusing particularly on those who work for private landowners, expanding the program into the Kittatinny Ridge and Maryland. It will also work to develop a Forester Endorsement Program in conjunction with other states within the Atlantic Flyway and connect private landowners to Audubon-endorsed foresters. Finally, Audubon will work with private companies to encourage the creation of demand for timber harvested on private lands that utilize healthy forest practices.

STRATEGY | Create a Collaborative Conservation Network. Work with land trusts and other partners to create a collaborative conservation network in the region, implementing a “Science

to Action” initiative that showcases bird-friendly forestry, trains natural resource professionals on healthy forest management practices, and increases access to management information and cost-share programs to private forest owners.

Migrating Birds

→ Create, enhance, and/or protect forested, migratory stopover habitat along the 185-mile Kittatinny Ridge to help support millions of migratory birds during the spring and fall segments of their full annual cycles.

STRATEGY | Create at least ten stopover sites for Migratory Birds. In 2022, Audubon teamed up with The Nature Conservancy to create a patch of migratory stopover habitat at Cove Mountain that will support migratory birds traveling along the Kittatinny Ridge in the fall and spring. Audubon will expand this stopover creation work further in other critical sections of the Ridge, working with Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Appalachian Trail Conservancy, land trusts, and other landowners to identify, create, and manage at least ten migratory bird stopover locations.

STRATEGY | Encourage and create supportive bird habitat along power transmission lines. Audubon will work with regional power companies, state agencies and private land trusts to create migratory stopover habitat along powerline transmission corridors. The project would also seek to reduce fragmentation effects on surrounding forests.

Forest-based Carbon Storages

→ Protect the most ecologically valuable, intact forest systems and restore existing mature forest bird habitat to increase the pace and scale of carbon sequestration in the region.

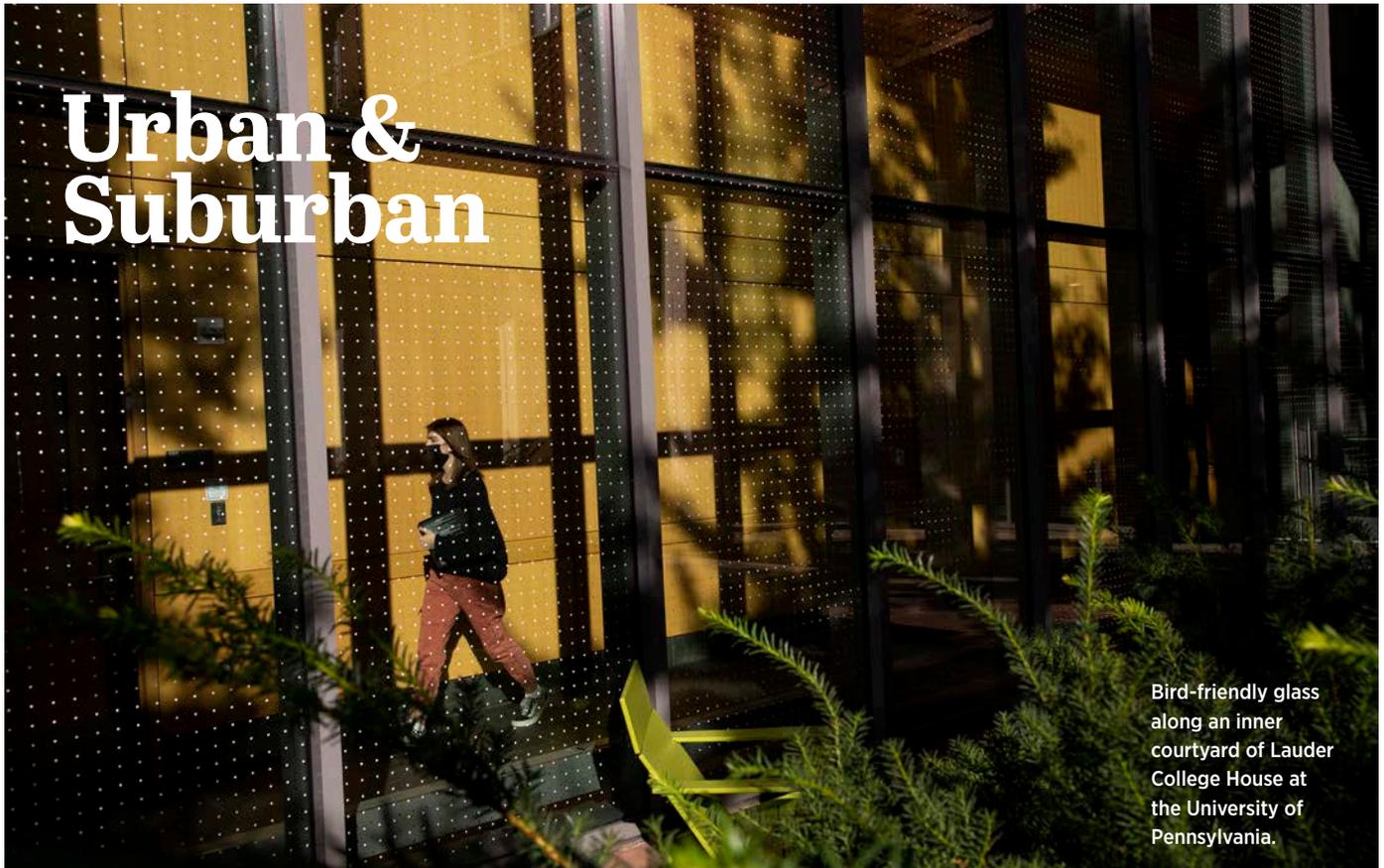
STRATEGY | Increase Pace and Scale of Carbon Markets to Preserve Forested Land.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic staff will continue to provide expertise and support to carbon programs, seeking to enroll 500 acres of private woodlands into carbon-sequestration geared management each year. Staff will monitor the impact of carbon sequestration programs on breeding birds and develop best management practices to promote mature forest bird habitat.

STRATEGY | Protect the region's most valuable forests. Working with Audubon's strong chapter network and through policy channels, staff will work to conserve and protect the region's forests from development especially in highly developed and fragmented portions of the Audubon Mid-Atlantic region and those situated within priority watersheds, DCNR Conservation Landscapes like the Kittatinny Ridge, and Audubon Important Bird Areas. Targeted communication campaigns and education programs at Audubon centers will highlight the importance of the Kittatinny Ridge to migratory birds and to slow the pace of human development and forest loss.

GOAL

Increase the ability for birds and people to coexist and thrive in urban and suburban areas in order to prevent population declines for resident and migratory bird species.



While only about 16% of the Mid-Atlantic land area is classified as urban or suburban, these areas continue to grow in size and in their significance to birds within the region. Millions of birds migrate annually through the region's two major east coast cities, using urban and suburban stopover locations during their heroic journeys.

Additionally, more and more species of birds—such as the Barred Owl—are adapting to be able to use urban and suburban areas as breeding and wintering areas.

The health of urban and suburban habitats has an impact on a wide array of bird species, many of which breed and winter in places thousands of miles outside of our region. Urban and suburban areas provide critical habitat and other benefits for many species of birds including declining species like the Chimney Swift,

Common Nighthawk, American Kestrel, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron and others. But it is also a landscape where dangers like reflective and transparent surfaces, artificial light at night, non-native plants, degraded habitats, pesticides and herbicides, and human disturbance (which can all cause a significant amount of mortality for numerous bird species leading to population decline) are concentrated. If birds within the Mid-Atlantic region are to thrive, they must be protected in urban and suburban areas.

Publicly-Accessible Bird-Friendly Habitats

→ Increase the number of bird-friendly habitats in the region's major urban areas so that all residents live within a ten-minute walk of a publicly-accessible biodiverse green space.

STRATEGY | Work with community partners to co-create publicly-accessible bird- and people-friendly habitats. With an initial focus in Baltimore and Philadelphia, Audubon Mid-Atlantic will work alongside nonprofit organizations, residents and municipal partners in communities that lack accessible biodiverse green space to advocate for, create and maintain bird-friendly habitats that are accessible to the public. This work will expand to other cities over time as we seek to align urban conservation work with efforts to reduce stormwater runoff using natural infrastructure (see Watersheds section, page 8) and reduce urban heat.

STRATEGY | Develop and implement a municipal-level policy agenda focused on natural infrastructure investments. Audubon Mid-Atlantic staff will work with Audubon chapters, community and organization partners to advocate and secure increased public funding

for natural infrastructure investments designed to address stormwater management and urban heat while also increasing the amount of public, biodiverse green spaces in cities. In doing so, we will seek to elevate the voices of local residents, particularly those who have long been denied a say in environmental work. We will also seek to preserve existing green spaces in Baltimore and Philadelphia neighborhoods experiencing development pressures.

Biodiversity on Privately-owned Lands

→ Support private efforts to create or enhance 1,000 acres of complex and biodiverse urban and suburban habitat to support breeding, migratory and wintering birds.

STRATEGY | Education

In collaboration with Audubon chapters, Audubon Mid-Atlantic will distribute education materials and host education programs focused on birds' needs for native plants. Audubon environmental centers will serve as native plant demonstration sites and host public programming, including workshops, that speak to the benefits of native plants for birds. Education staff will also

create opportunities to highlight the needs of birds during migration through Audubon's Migratory Bird Explorer and through city-wide events like Baltimore Birding Weekend (May) and the Philadelphia Birding Weekend (October).

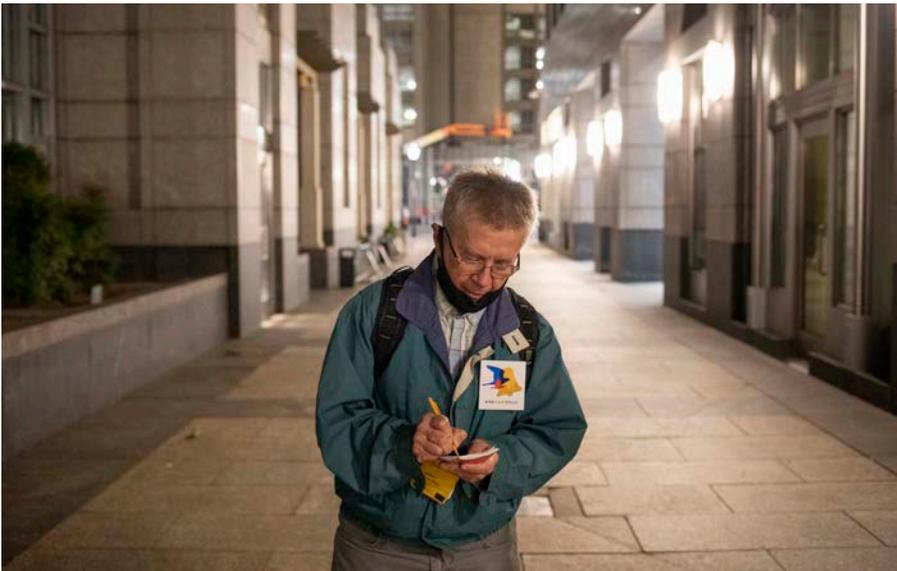
Decrease Bird Collisions

→ Triple the total number of buildings and other structures that are designed, modified, and/or managed to prevent bird collisions in order to reduce injury and mortality and to prevent loss.

STRATEGY | Expand Lights Out, Bird Collision Monitoring, and Safe Passage Programs. AMA will work with partner organizations and Audubon chapters to maintain and expand existing Safe Passage and Lights Out programs, which seek to reduce artificial lights at night, within Baltimore, Philadelphia and Harrisburg and identify opportunities to extend Lights Out to other cities in the region. Audubon staff will also work with volunteers to conduct bird collision monitoring in Philadelphia during fall and spring migration and share results publicly. Audubon's centers will develop public programs focused on increasing knowledge about and participation in Lights Out, and use Audubon's Migratory Bird Explorer to make people more aware of the volume of birds that fly through Philadelphia and Baltimore during migration seasons.

STRATEGY | Building Design and Retrofit. Continue to advocate for buildings and other types of human structures to be designed and/or retrofitted in ways that do not allow reflectivity, transparency, or lighting designs to cause bird collisions. Enact state and local building code changes to require bird-friendly building designs in all new construction and to retrofit state and municipal buildings.

Window collision monitor Stephen Maciejewski makes his early morning rounds in downtown Philadelphia.



GOAL

Renewable energy sources are properly sited and managed to reduce the risk to migratory and nesting birds. AMA will also support state policy initiatives that seek to increase the use of non-emitting energy sources to 40% of total energy usage by 2030.



Climate & Renewable Energy

Audubon Mid-Atlantic is working to ensure that offshore turbines like this one are sited in ways that are that do minimal harm to birds.

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to bird and human populations in the Mid-Atlantic region. In Maryland, climate-driven sea level rise poses an existential threat to essential coastal bird habitats, like salt marshes and nesting islands.

In Pennsylvania, communities will see increased flooding from severe storms resulting in damage to riparian bird habitat, agricultural land, and important infrastructure in communities across the state.

Scientists agree that in order to prevent the most disruptive societal and ecological transformations we must prevent a global temperature increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius. The most effective way to prevent such warming is the reduction of emissions from the

carbon-based energy economy. National Audubon Society and Audubon Mid-Atlantic will prioritize policies and practices that increase renewable energy production while taking action to minimize the threats to birds that renewable energy development might pose. Audubon recognizes that even well-sited wind turbines and solar arrays will have some negative impacts on birds, but that the cost to birds of continuing high carbon emissions is ultimately far greater.

All Renewable Energy Projects Sited and Maintained to Reduce Risks to Birds

→ All utility-scale wind and solar developments in the Mid-Atlantic region will be sited, constructed and operated properly to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on birds and other wildlife. Through policy changes and advocacy this means codifying habitat conservation and avian threat mitigation in the processes of developing wind and solar power.

STRATEGY | Socialize “Safe for Birds” checklist with industry, advocates and public makers.

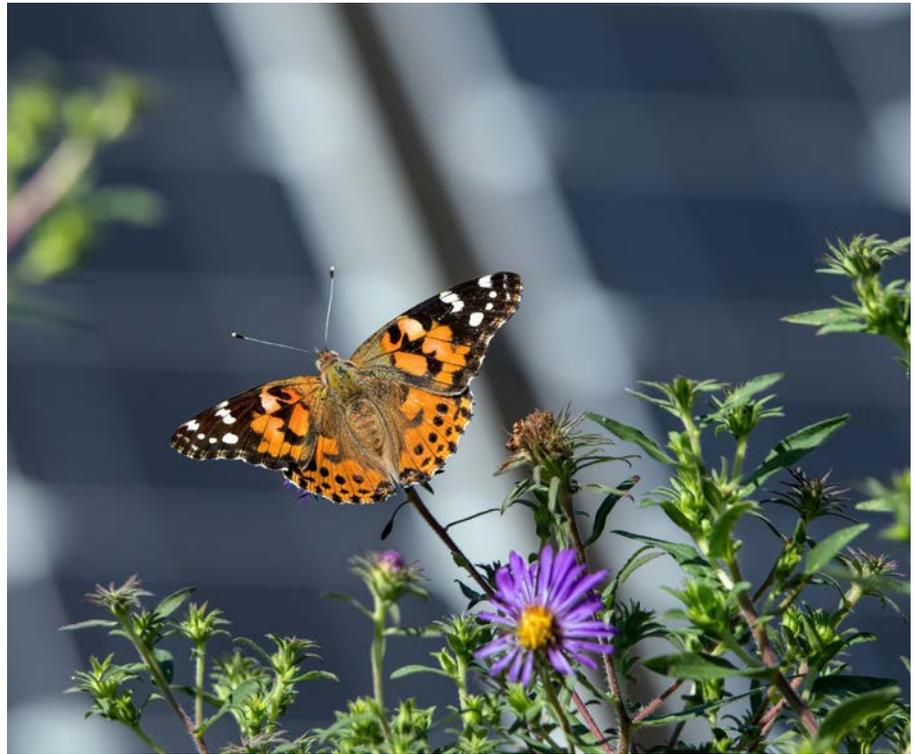
Audubon Mid-Atlantic staff will elevate National Audubon Society’s Clean Energy Initiative’s “Safe for Birds” checklist with partners, industry, and the Audubon chapter network to guide siting of Mid-Atlantic wind and solar projects. By 2030, these best practices will become accepted as industry standards by government and public service commissions.

STRATEGY | Promote Habitat Enhancement Opportunities.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic will help draw attention to and promote policy guidelines that require renewable energy companies to identify opportunities to codify habitat conservation and mitigate avian threats. For example, regulators could require dredge material from offshore wind construction be used to create bird nesting and Horseshoe Crab breeding habitat. They could also require solar companies to install and maintain bird-friendly plantings in meadows and grasslands and energy companies to offset habitat lost due to new projects.



Red Knots and other shorebird species feed on the eggs of horseshoe crabs in Delaware Bay.



A butterfly lands in front of solar panels.

Increase and Accelerate Renewable Energy Development

→ 50% of electricity used in Maryland will come from renewable energy sources, and 25% of energy used in PA will come from renewables by 2030.

STRATEGY | Support efforts to increase the number of regional renewable energy projects. Through policy levers and education, Audubon Mid-Atlantic supports well-planned and well-sited offshore wind, terrestrial wind and solar power development through public comment and multi-layered advocacy which combines conservation science and energy development—highlighting the real threat of a warming planet to birds and human communities alike. Additionally, Audubon Mid-Atlantic will continue to support and educate the public about Pennsylvania’s and Maryland’s continued participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Reduce Barriers to Access for Renewable Energy Options in Communities

STRATEGY | Reduce Barriers to Access for Renewable Energy Options in Communities. Audubon Mid-Atlantic policy staff will work with partners and public policy makers to reduce the regulatory burden of community (non-utility scale and other distributed wind and solar projects from accessing transmission and distribution grids. Audubon Mid-Atlantic supports policies and funding mechanisms designed to incentivize property developers, state and local governments, and institutional land owners to develop distributed renewable energy projects, understanding that already developed areas are the optimal location for installing wind and solar.

Our vision

We envision a Mid-Atlantic region of healthy and resilient ecosystems where birds thrive and where all people have access to nature and a voice in environmental stewardship.

Working alongside a diverse flock of supporters and partners, Audubon Mid-Atlantic strives to slow down and reverse the impact that climate change and habitat loss have had on the wide range of bird species that depend on the Mid-Atlantic region.

Guided by science, our conservation, policy, and engagement efforts focus on the region's critical bird habitats: coastal marshes and barrier islands, forests, and watersheds, as well as cities where many of those distinct habitats exist.

With a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, Audubon Mid-Atlantic's work will include all populations—particularly those who have been intentionally left out of previous environmental movements. We aim to foster dialogue and listen intently as we inform and equip the public with the tools they need to be advocates for birds, for diverse and resilient ecosystems, and for communities that will provide safe refuge for birds and people into the future.



Participants watch during a banding demonstration at Patterson Park on the last day of Baltimore Birding Weekend.

Credits

Cover Common Tern with chick, Sarah Devlin/Audubon Photography Awards

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Page 1 Luke Franke/Audubon

Pages 2 Photo Randy Streufert/Audubon Photography Awards

Page 3 Map, Susan Loredó/Audubon

Page 4 The Brothers' Network Archive

Pages 6 Frank Lehman/Audubon Photography Awards

Page 7 From top: David Harp; Nikunj Patel/Audubon Photography Awards

Pages 8 Luke Franke/Audubon; Map, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Page 9 Kathy Johnston/Audubon Photography Awards; Map, Shannon 1/Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Page 10 Scott Parkhill/Audubon

Page 11 Map, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Pages 12-13 Luke Franke/Audubon

Page 14 Lauren Owens Lambert

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Back cover Barbara White/Audubon Photography Awards

Wood Ducks



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