

## PRINCIPLES FOR GUIDING OUR WORK IN PUBLIC POLICY

The public policy work of Audubon California:

- Is directly connected to the conservation outcomes and priorities of Audubon California inspired by the strategic plan and articulated in the annual workplan.
- Is one of several integrated tools Audubon California uses in making progress toward its outcomes.
- Will take place at the local, state and national levels as determined by specific programmatic needs and it will be legislative, administrative and regulatory in nature.
- Is inclusive and collaborative, encompassing where appropriate talent and interests of many different Audubon programs, chapters and partnering organizations. All Audubon California staff will have the opportunity to participate, either directly or as engaged members of the public.
- Will leverage the inherent advantages of Audubon: the respect we enjoy among the public and decision-makers, our knowledge and credibility about birds and the local power of our grassroots organized through our chapter network.
- Will seek to build bridges between mainstream conservation and low-income communities of color and making traditional conservation work relevant to these communities and their unique needs.

## AUDUBON CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION OUTCOMES:

### OUTCOME 1: STABILIZE AND INCREASE POPULATIONS OF AT-RISK SPECIES OF BIRDS

**California Condor Recovery:** Ban lead ammunition in California Condor habitat – through the recently signed AB 821 and companion regulatory efforts of the CA Fish and Game Commission. Initiate partnership with American Ornithologists' Union to undertake a review of the California Condor Recovery Program. Help secure a conservation agreement for significant conservation on the Tejon Ranch in order to protect priority species and habitats on the Tejon Ranch and ensure regional connectivity between the southern Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range through the Tehachapi Mountains.

**Western Snowy Plover Recovery:** Maintain Audubon lead on Snowy Plover conservation. Defend against the possible weakening of Snowy Plover protections if proposed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Assist with Snowy Plover conservation projects through chapter funding and reviewing materials. Develop strategy for Audubon California involvement in Snowy Plover conservation, particularly in central and southern California.

**Tricolored Blackbird Recovery:** Implement the Tricolored Blackbird Conservation Agreement in partnership with public agencies, growers, and conservation partners as a collaborative approach to reverse the decline of this globally endangered species.

## **OUTCOME 2: PREVENT PERSISTENT DECLINES OR RANGE CONTRACTIONS IN POPULATIONS OF COMMON NATIVE BIRDS**

**Global Warming:** Support federal regulation towards a goal of passing federal cap and trade legislation to reduce emissions 80% by 2050, passing federal and state Renewable Electricity, fuel economy and other policies, ensuring that the solutions are sustainable and minimize impacts on wildlife, mobilizing individual and community action to reduce emissions and support global warming legislation. Complete global warming analyses of habitat and bird distribution in California to help Californians better understand the impacts of climate change in their communities. Share information with chapters and coordinate with NAS on campaign priorities in California.

**Reducing Windpower Impacts on Birds:** Secure the adoption by the California Energy Commission of statewide guidelines on wind power to reduce impacts on birds; monitor and help ensure the use of these guidelines. Work closely with Audubon chapters to provide best available information on how to reduce impacts on birds.

**Strengthening Protection for Wetlands:** Ensure that the State Water Resources Control Board adopts an effective discharge and fill protection policy for nonfederal waters. Also help shape San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board policy on watershed/riparian protection and adoption statewide.

**Working with Agriculture and Private Landowners to Protect Birds:** Expand Audubon California's Landowner Stewardship Program which works with private landowners to conserve and restore bird and wildlife habitat on farms and ranches while preserving or enhancing the economic conditions for agriculture. Current program objectives are to enhance and restore riparian and grassland habitats, improve forage quality, improve water quality, and reduce erosion. The project currently operates in Yolo and Solano Counties and is expanding to Imperial County as a strategy to help ensure that the vast agricultural lands in the Imperial Valley continue to support huge numbers of birds, including Mountain Plover, Long-billed Curlew and others.

## **OUTCOME 3: IMPROVE AND PROTECT THE HEALTH OF LANDSCAPES THAT SUPPORT BIRDS OF THE AMERICAS**

**California Important Bird Areas:** Launch initiative to protect and restore at least ten priority IBA sites in California in close coordination with Audubon chapters. Key areas include the San Francisco Bay, central valley wetlands, Southern California coastal wetlands, and the Salton Sea among others. Using our partnership with California State Parks we seek to strengthen IBA conservation opportunities. The sites serve as a focus for securing public funding authorized in the passage of Prop. 84.

**South Fork of the Kern River/Southern Sierra Nevada:** Expand riparian habitat protection programs at the South Fork of the Kern River, one of the most important riparian bird conservation sites in the Western US. Our work is anchored at the Kern River Preserve, entering its 26th year with close to 10 miles of river frontage and cottonwood-willow forest protected by Audubon or our partners. The Kern River Preserve is one of the finest cottonwood-riparian forests remaining in California; a stronghold for Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and numerous other riparian species.

**Salton Sea:** Ensure that Salton Sea restoration maximizes bird and habitat restoration. The Salton Sea Ecosystem is a globally important bird area providing habitat for more than 400 bird species and its restoration will be one of the most complex projects ever undertaken. To maintain and clean up the Sea, major alterations will be required to the Sea itself and major areas of farmland, also vital for birds will need to be sustained. This will require significant public investment and support at a time when California faces a serious budget crisis. We will continue to work with local farmers to improve habitat, and to ensure funding that will be required for restoration of the Sea.

**San Francisco Bay:** Maintain a leadership role in the restoration of San Francisco Bay and associated wetland habitats of the Delta. Restoration of the San Francisco Bay is among the country's largest conservation efforts—with a goal of restoring approximately 100,000 acres of former wetlands back to quality habitat. With a network of dedicated chapters and the Richardson Bay Audubon Center we are well positioned to maintain the well deserved national importance for the restoration and protection of the San Francisco Estuary. Working with Audubon chapters we will complete mapping of Important Bird Areas in San Francisco Bay and commence actual restoration efforts on key parcels within the national wildlife refuge.

**Sanctuaries:** Continue to protect and restore Audubon California's sanctuary system that comprises over 15,000 acres. From Starr Ranch our 4,000-acre sanctuary in southeast Orange County that protects a mosaic of grassland, oak woodland, riparian, and coastal sage scrub to the Mayacamas Mountains sanctuary straddling Napa and Sonoma Counties, to key holdings in the Central Valley such as the Wattis, Bobcat and Bobelaine sanctuaries, on-going restoration of our sanctuaries offer an opportunity to enhance key habitat in the Pacific Flyway. We will continue to operate the many diverse and important research projects at the sanctuaries, use them as hubs for conservation and continue to actively secure public funding to expand the size and quality of habitats protected.

#### **OUTCOME 4: BUILDING A STRONGER AND MORE DIVERSE CONSERVATION CONSTITUENCY**

**Chapters and Audubon Centers:** Our network of 48 Audubon chapters, our centers at Debs Park and on Richardson Bay, and the education programs based at sanctuaries, serve as gathering points to educate, inspire, and equip people of all ages for nature appreciation and action. Continued public support and public funding depends on communities of people who care about wildlife protection expressing their priorities to government at all levels. Audubon's unique blend of local nature appreciation and conservation action has always been a central Audubon tool for realizing our goals. Here in California, so much of our outreach and education of the public happens at the chapter level through monthly programs, bird walks, classroom outreach, chapter-led nature centers and docents. We will strengthen the partnership between Audubon at the local and state levels for the conservation benefits they will produce. Through programs at the local level we will emphasize bridge building between mainstream conservation and low-income communities of color and making traditional conservation work relevant to these communities and their unique needs.

January 10, 2008