

AUDUBON ON CAMPUS

A GUIDE FOR STARTING YOUR
STUDENT CONSERVATION CHAPTER





Wilson's Warbler

AUDUBON'S MISSION

THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
PROTECTS BIRDS AND THE PLACES
THEY NEED, TODAY AND TOMORROW.

WELCOME

You are amazing. If you're reading this handbook, you are considering or already are leading an Audubon student conservation chapter on your campus. That makes you part of an unbroken conservation story stretching back into the late 1800s, when a grassroots network of caring people came together to stop the out-of-control slaughter of America's birds and forge a whole new way of thinking about our relationship to birds and our natural resources.

Those early Audubon activists saved entire species—the spectacular Snowy Egret, for example—from extinction. Today, the National Audubon Society and its many chapters form a vibrant network

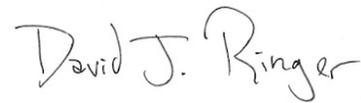
of committed conservationists, birders, and naturalists from across generations, races, faiths, and political parties.

All of us are inspired by the beauty and wonder of birds, and we are all dedicated to protecting the places that they—and we—depend on. From Spotted Sandpiper to college engineering sophomore, we all need healthy ecosystems, clean air, clean water, and a stable climate.

As you become a leader in the Audubon network, you will find many, many opportunities, and you'll have a lot of fun. You'll deepen friendships and make new ones. You'll have amazing experiences in nature. You'll develop skills, building your résumé and finding

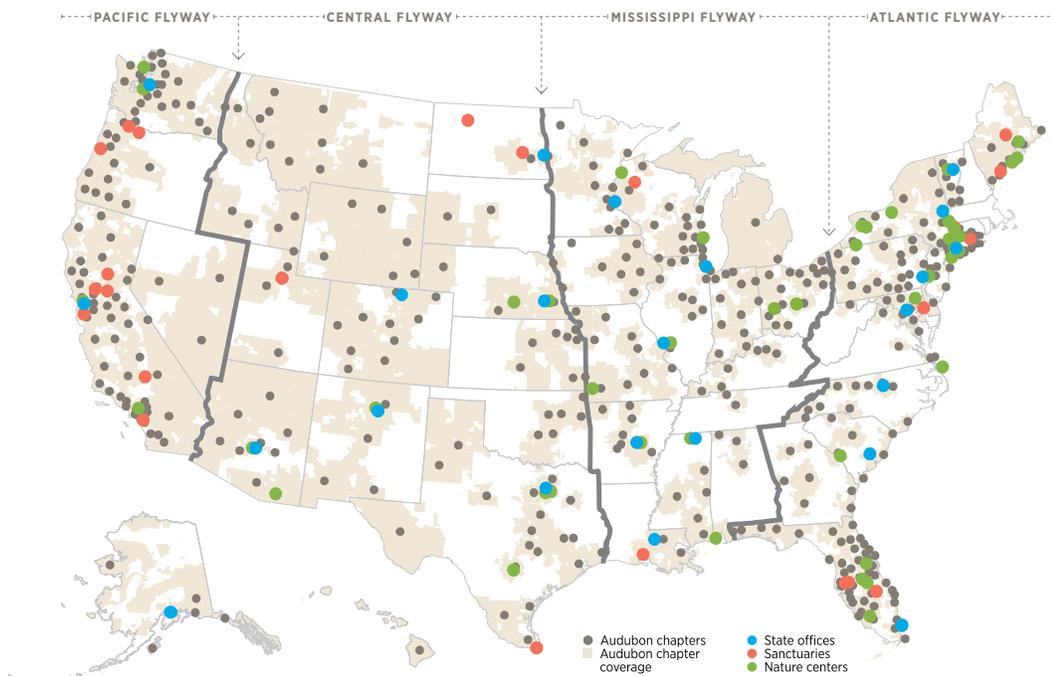
opportunities for internships and careers. You'll build relationships with faculty members, elected officials, community leaders, scientists, and conservationists. And you'll make a difference on your campus and in your community.

The future for many of our birds is uncertain. And the environment that sustains us all is under threat. It's your time to lead. Thank you for all that you do.



David J. Ringer
 Chief Network Officer
 National Audubon Society

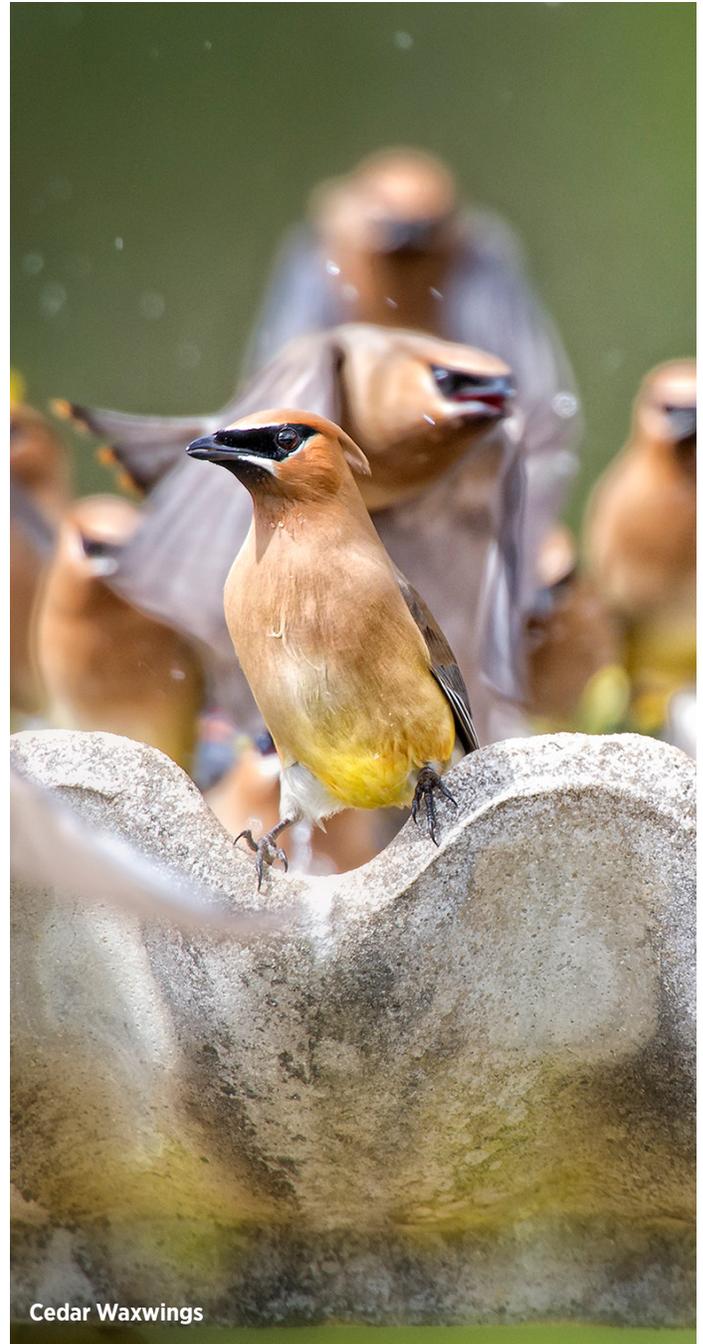
OUR NETWORK



A Note of Thanks

We would like to extend our special appreciation to the following students who challenged Audubon to develop a campus chapter program and then worked with us in partnership to develop the program: Tiffany Briggs, Rachel Callaghan, Madison Washburn, Brooke Widmar, and Carly Zeis. Special thanks to **Natalie Fisher Hooper** for her leadership and vision in helping to create this handbook.

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Cedar Waxwings



About Audubon

The National Audubon Society is a nonprofit conservation organization that works across the Western Hemisphere to protect birds throughout their life cycles and all the special places they need along the way. Audubon’s work includes ambitious conservation and public policy programs, bird science leadership, and public engagement and outreach, all made possible by an unparalleled network of grassroots chapters, volunteers, advocates, and partner organizations.

Our conservation work focuses on five strategic priorities critical to birds and their habitats (read more at strategicplan.audubon.org):



CLIMATE



COASTS



WATER



WORKING
LANDS



BIRD-
FRIENDLY
COMMUNITIES

The Audubon movement started in the 1890s when activists in major U.S. cities—many of them women—were outraged by the mass slaughter of birds for their plumes. In 1905, local Audubon groups banded together to form the National Audubon Society. They ended the plume trade and kicked off a century of conservation. (Read more: audubon.org/about/history-audubon-and-waterbird-conservation.)

Today, Audubon continues to listen to what birds are telling us about the environment. We are a large, vibrant, diverse, and growing movement of people who love birds, are committed to conservation, and are working to improve our communities. We are advocates and activists, a respected and influential voice on public policy issues at every level that impact the health of the world we share with birds and all living things.

We’re delighted to have you join us.

 We are conservationists and activists dedicated to making a positive impact on the health of the world.

AUDUBON AND YOU

By forming a student conservation chapter of the National Audubon Society, you are joining a passionate community of experts in science, conservation, education, advocacy, communication, and—of course—birds!

Leading or joining a campus chapter is about great recreational and social opportunities. It's also about making a difference on your campus and in your community. It's about building your leadership skills, your knowledge, your résumé, and your contact list. And it's about having fun as you experience the wonder and joy of birds and nature. Thank you for your leadership. Read on to get started, and remember: You are what hope looks like to a bird.





Audubon’s Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Just as biodiversity strengthens natural systems, the diversity of human experience strengthens our conservation efforts for the benefit of nature and all human beings. Audubon must represent and reflect that human diversity, embracing it in all the communities where we work, in order to achieve our conservation goals. To that end, we are committed to increasing the diversity of our staff, board, volunteers, members, and supporters, and to fostering an inclusive network of Audubon Centers and Chapters in all kinds of communities, from rural to urban.

Equity, diversity and inclusion is not only a best practice for business, it’s a strategic imperative. Our business and conservation strategies are enriched and made stronger by the contribution of the experiences, perspectives, and values of diverse individuals and communities. Protecting and conserving nature and the environment transcends political, cultural and social boundaries, and so must Audubon in order to expand our network’s reach and engage more people in protecting birds and habitat.

We are dedicated to providing a work environment that prioritizes fairness and respect. At Audubon, all employees are treated equally and are encouraged to achieve their fullest potential. We respect the individuality of each member of our community, and we are committed to a workplace free of any kind of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, national or ethnic origin, politics, or veteran status.

With a plurality of voices, Audubon will inspire more people and conserve more habitats. Respect, inclusion, and opportunity for people of all backgrounds, lifestyles and perspectives will attract the best ideas and harness the greatest passion to shape a healthier, more vibrant future for all of us who share our planet. The birds we are pledged to protect differ in color, size, behavior, geographical preference and countless other ways. By honoring and celebrating the equally remarkable diversity of the human species, Audubon will bring new creativity, effectiveness and leadership to our work throughout the hemisphere.

As students, you are uniquely equipped to carry out this mission. During your time on a college or university campus you will arguably be exposed to and experience more examples of and ideas about acceptance and tolerance than any other point in your life. We look to you, as the future of Audubon, to embody these core values as part of a network committed to representing equity, diversity, and thoughtfulness in everything we do.

 Participants in Audubon’s second Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Summit at Hog Island, Maine



Wood Ducks

A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS

We are here to ensure that your next steps will be as quick and painless as possible. Please remember that the purpose of this handbook is to help guide you through the creation of your own chapter. Creativity and individuality will keep your chapter running once it's been established, so while the foundations of your organization should align with the mission of the National Audubon Society, we encourage you to continue to be curious and to express your interests and ideas through the activities of this new Audubon chapter. Best of luck!

STEP ONE:

Find Your Fellow Members

STEP TWO:

Name Your Chapter

STEP THREE:

Learn the Process

STEP FOUR:

Find a Faculty Advisor, Establish Relationships

STEP FIVE:

Draft a Constitution

STEP SIX: Identify Officer Candidates

STEP SEVEN:

Complete and Submit Your Application to Audubon

STEP EIGHT:

Establish Your Chapter Online

STEP NINE:

Grow and Maintain Your Membership

1

FIND YOUR FELLOW MEMBERS

You probably already know friends and fellow students—and possibly even staff and faculty members—on your campus who share your interest in birds and love of nature. Use your contacts and social media to let others know

you're starting an Audubon chapter on campus. Enlist their time and energy to keep enthusiasm high, maintain momentum, and help you through the next steps.



2

NAME YOUR CHAPTER

The name for your chapter will take the form _____ Audubon Student Conservation Chapter (“_____ Audubon” for short). How do you fill in the blank? You can choose to use the name of your college or university—if the institution allows you to do that—or you might incorporate the name of a bird or native plant species relevant to your area. You know your school best, so be sure to remember that this will be most people’s first impression of you. You want your name to stick and be attractive to new members, so keep it creative and simple.

You need a chapter name that’s unique (i.e., no other Audubon organization uses that name) and fitting for you and your college or university.

As you think about a name, be sure to consider questions like these:

- How can a name work to get attention and draw new members in?
- What species of bird, tree, or natural feature might be easily recognizable in your area or on your campus?
- Are there any negative implications associated with any potential name you might choose?

Some examples of campus chapter names include Seahawk Audubon, Winding Brook Audubon, or TZU State Audubon.

Please submit your suggested name (and one alternative) with your chapter-formation application during Step Seven. It will be formally approved at that time.

3

LEARN THE PROCESS

Your college/university has rules, guidelines, and procedures for establishing a new campus-based organization, so you need to get that information. You should be able to find it on the school's website. As you go forward, incorporate those requirements into your process with Audubon.

It can be helpful to introduce your group to the administration via a list of “pros” for the institution. How can your Audubon chapter benefit the school? Issues and opportunities like conservation, professionalism, increased civic involvement among students, volunteer

work, alignment with curriculum, hemispheric recognition, study abroad opportunities, etc. can really help to plead your case. Additionally, there may be a project your campus has been looking to undertake, and your chapter might propose to take it on—e.g., native plant gardens; monitoring surveys; small-scale construction projects; storm water runoff and watershed research; or even signage campaigns.

Always be respectful of your school's unique set of requirements and be certain to meet those expectations from the outset.

4

FIND A FACULTY ADVISOR, ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS

Your college/university is likely to require that you have an advisor. This individual should be a faculty or staff member with whom you have a good relationship. He or she will be responsible for keeping your club on track in terms of its relationship with the school administration. You'll want an advisor with the know-how and passion to help keep your group vital. Your advisor will be required to attend your meetings and be an active participant in your chapter's undertakings. This advisor will not have voting privileges within the organization. He or she will

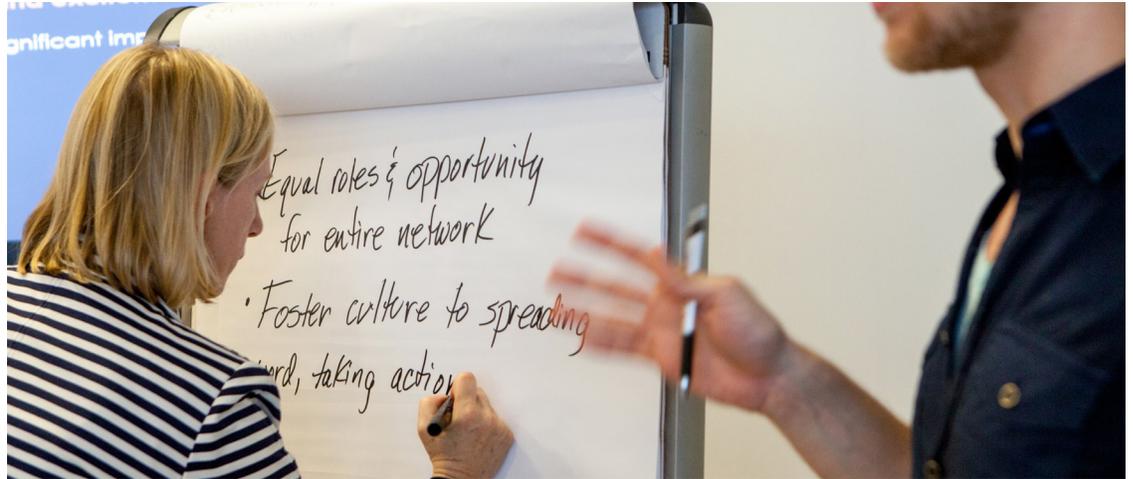
assist in scheduling events and promoting student events at local Audubon chapter meetings. Remember that your advisor is a very valuable member of your team and will be a big factor in your success. Be sure to take advantage of that person's advice and

counsel, and also to express your gratitude and respect for his or her willingness to donate time to your chapter.

Your Audubon network is already on your side. Reach out to ask questions or seek advice at any time. Keep in mind that you will be required to keep in contact with the National Audubon Society's Student Outreach Associate at multiple times during your semester. (This person will serve as the liaison between your chapter and Audubon. You'll find contact information in Appendix I: Resources.) In addition, you are encouraged to form relationships with local Audubon chapters in your area as well as any nearby centers or state offices. Networking will open a multitude of doors for you and your members, and collaborations on projects are strongly encouraged.

Finally, making a connection with your professors and other professionals at your college/university will benefit you not only for the purposes of this organization, but also for success in your career while you're on campus.





5

DRAFT A CONSTITUTION

Your college/university will most likely require you to draft a constitution for your chapter. Since Audubon, too, will require each chapter to submit this as part of the new-chapter-formation petition, we've provided an example and guidance.

Take a look at the sample constitution we've provided for you to download and edit. (See audubon.org/conservation/campus-chapters.) Some general guidelines for the document are as follows:

- Be clear and concise. This document is not intended to confuse; its purpose is to outline your mission and your expectations for the group.
- Stay aligned with Audubon's mission to protect birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow.
- Keep on focus. Your goals should align with Audubon's five strategies (see page 15). Funneling your resources into these five areas will ensure you make progress and real impacts.
- Be aware of Audubon's statement on equity, diversity, and inclusion (see page 7), and maintain this mantra in your own branch of the organization.
- Familiarize yourself with your school's expectations of you. Many campuses will insist you include anti-hazing or democratic policies in your constitution.
- Recognize that you are representing a brand: Audubon. When you speak on behalf of your chapter, you're serving to represent the most effective conservation network in America. Be proud, but be sure to be well informed. First impressions are important, and it's crucial that you represent an organization that speaks across the aisle and is backed by science. Effectiveness stems from cooperation and compromise, an attitude that should be conveyed through your constitution and your work.

You will attach a copy of your constitution as approved by your college/university to your chapter-formation application, described in Step 7.

 Include your goals and values in your chapter's constitution.

6
OFFICER POSITIONS:

President
(Chairperson)

Vice President
(Vice Chairperson)

Secretary
(Communications Director)

Treasurer

Additional Officers:
Additional officer positions can include, but should not be limited to: Program Chair, Membership Chair, Publicity Chair, and Photographer.

IDENTIFY OFFICER CANDIDATES

You've gotten established with your school, you've been in contact with the National Audubon Society, and you're ready to appoint leaders for your chapter. This step is very important. You've probably already been discussing with your peers who may assume which role in the budding chapter. This will be the only time you may appoint—rather than elect—officers. For future officer changes, you will follow a democratic election process. In your chapter application (see Step 7) you will provide the names and contact information for the four main officers: president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Each officer

will serve a term of one year, or two semesters and a summer, and elections will be held every January going forward. Officers will be allowed to serve up to two terms consecutively, providing all duties are completed. In addition, each officer will be expected to maintain active membership in the National Audubon Society. Officer positions are listed at left and are described in greater detail in the sample constitution.

Democratic elections will be required to name future officers. These officers may campaign or be elected by acclamation, depending on the number of students running.

7
COMPLETE AND SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION TO AUDUBON

Once your organization has been approved by your college/university, it's time to complete and submit your application to Audubon requesting approval to establish a new Audubon chapter. It will be reviewed by staff at the National Audubon Society. You can complete the application online. A link is included in Appendix II to this handbook.

If you have questions about how to fill out the application, don't hesitate to contact the Student Outreach Associate, whose contact information you'll find in Appendix I: Resources. We will accept applications on a rolling basis. Watch for an email confirming that the application has been received. You can expect to have your letter of approval soon after the application has been processed.



8
ESTABLISH YOUR CHAPTER ONLINE

After your petition is approved, you'll be contacted via email again to establish your presence online with the rest of the Audubon network. You'll be granted access to a number of Audubon's online resources. These platforms are shared by the entire Audubon network: chapters, members, ambassadors, and staff alike. Your conduct on these sites should represent a passionate and innovative campus group. Each of these resources should be helpful as you search for ideas and resources in the future. Each is outlined below:

- Audubon Works—This platform serves as a hub for Audubon activity. Here you will find resources you can share or download from National Audubon Society and from other chapters. This site includes a library, where resources may be uploaded and downloaded, a groups page, where you can connect with other Audubon members with similar interests, and a forum.
- Audubon's Digital Asset Management system (the DAM)—This platform is a resource used to download Audubon-branded photographs for use on Audubon materials only.
- Squarespace Website—Audubon has a template for use by chapters to set up their very own website! We encourage you to do this and use this site to advertise events, successes, and any other goings-on in your chapter.
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, other Social Media—Don't forget to establish social media sites for your chapter! Your secretary or social media coordinator should keep up with updating these sites consistently and managing your following. Some fun, consistent, suggested posts include "Wacky Bird Wednesdays," etc. Encourage your followers to participate in photo contests!
- College/university-specific online platforms—Be sure to explore any online avenues that your school might provide. For example, any campus e-newsletters, social media, or campus life involvement websites.
- Linking up with the state office/local chapters—Reach out to and keep contact with your surrounding chapters. Established Audubon chapters will most likely be more than willing to engage your members in projects they may be working on. Collaboration and networking are excellent examples of what makes Audubon successful.





9

GROW AND MAINTAIN YOUR MEMBERSHIP

You have active members and other students who are interested in your chapter's mission and activities. Here are some tips on attracting new members and retaining existing members:

- Attend campus recruitment events.
- Remain professional and remember that you are representing your chapter at all times. Be sure to "advertise" in classes and amongst friends.
- Ask professors to speak to incoming freshman and sophomore classes at the start, or even middle of the semester, every semester
- Make eye-catching flyers; templates for these and other materials can be found online at Audubon Works. (If you have a new idea, be sure to upload it!)
- Be invested in your members on an individual basis.
- Host interesting guest speakers and make meetings fun and worthwhile.
- Stay active and involved online and in local Audubon events.
- Take advantage of the resources offered to you. Make sure to have a firm grasp on your network and on the opportunities available. Keep in contact with connections you make, and take note of which events you should replicate based on the interest and gathering that they draw.
- Invite professionals to talk about careers in ornithology, conservation, and related fields.



AUDUBON'S FIVE STRATEGIES PUT INTO ACTION ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

As we mentioned before, Audubon works through five main strategies to protect birds and the habitats they live in: Climate, Coasts, Bird-Friendly Communities, Water, and Working Lands. When you are deciding what kinds of advocacy or other projects your chapter will take on, you should use these five strategies as lenses through which to look at the challenges on and around your campus. >>



CLIMATE



WORKING
LANDS



WATER



COASTS



BIRD-
FRIENDLY
COMMUNITIES

We recognize that the most pressing issues will vary among chapters, so feel free to be creative. However, when possible, think about how your chapter's efforts will contribute to Audubon's main goals. Below are some great ways for your chapter to plug into Audubon's priorities.

Plants for Birds (see Appendix I: Resources), a major focus of the Bird-Friendly Communities strategy, can be a great way to get started on your campus. Your school probably has a department or office that is responsible for landscaping. You can reach out to them to discuss their approach to including native plant species, with the goal of increasing their use of natives. Some schools have sustainability offices or officers and establishing a relationship with them can be an excellent step: Native plants save water and require less pesticides and fertilizer, which can advance institutional sustainability goals. Helping to create a demonstration garden that features native plants may be a great step and could provide a site for conducting research on the benefits of native plants, another benefit in the campus environment. Finding ways to advance the goals of your chapter and your school simultaneously is a sound approach and can really show the value of having an Audubon chapter on campus! The Plants for Birds landing page and native plants database, as well as the native plant toolkit accessible on Audubon Works (see Appendix I: Resources), all have great resources that can support your chapter in these efforts. Undertaking a project like one of these will help you build an open line of communication between your chapter and the college or university you attend. Remember to always remain professional in conversations with your school's faculty and staff. It's crucial that



you represent Audubon and yourself in a way that will make others want to stay in contact with you.

Another Bird-Friendly Communities initiative that your chapter might address is **Bird-Friendly Buildings**. You could offer to survey the number of bird collisions happening at buildings on campus while educating buildings and grounds staff about solutions, such as implementing Lights Out (see Appendix I: Resources) or modifying reflective surfaces for the buildings with the highest collision rates.

Another way you can help birds and the places they need is to lead an effort to help your campus reduce carbon pollution. You could start by

speaking to your school's sustainability coordinator or head of the science department. Find out if your school has a climate action plan in place. (You'll find links to examples from other schools in Appendix I: Resources.) If so, see if there is a part of the plan your chapter could help support. If not, you could start with approaching your school's administration about signing a pledge of action on climate and sustainability (See Appendix I: Resources, for a link to an example).

Working with nearby Audubon chapters, centers, and state offices, you will be able to identify additional projects that make sense for your campus and your community.



KEEPING YOUR CHAPTER IN GOOD STANDING

Now that you have established a new chapter and you've gotten a myriad of requirements under your belt, we would like to take just a moment to say congratulations. Welcome to the most effective conservation network in America.

Welcome to a network of environmentalists just like yourself who love birds, and who have spent the last 100 years speaking on their behalf and who intend to continue to do so for the birds of today and tomorrow. Officially, now, welcome to Audubon.

We are so thrilled to have you on board with us. Now that you have joined the network as a registered campus-based chapter, we do have a few requirements you will be expected to meet. Some requirements will be annual, some will be discretionary and/or biannual.

First, and perhaps most importantly, you will be required to submit an annual report by April 15. The annual report form and the online reporting system will be available on Audubon Works (see Appendix I: Resources) starting in January of each year, giving you ample time to collect and submit your information.

APPENDICES

I. Resources

Contact Audubon Student Outreach Associate:
campuschapters@audubon.org

National Audubon Society:
audubon.org

Audubon Student Conservation Chapter Program: **audubon.org/conservation/campus-chapters**

National Audubon Society Strategic Plan: **strategicplan.audubon.org/**

Audubon state offices, chapters, centers, and sanctuaries:
audubon.org/about/audubon-near-you

National Audubon Society history:
audubon.org/about/history-audubon-and-waterbird-conservation

Sample Campus Chapter constitution:
audubon.org/conservation/campus-chapters

Audubon Works: **works.audubon.org**

Audubon Creating Bird-Friendly Communities strategy:
audubon.org/conservation/bird-friendly-communities

Audubon Plants for Birds program:
audubon.org/plantsforbirds

Lights Out project:
audubon.org/conservation/project/lights-out

Sample campus climate action plans:
luther.edu/sustainability/assets/Luther_College_Climate_Action_Plan_11_15_09_1.pdf

amherst.edu/amherst-story/today/green-amherst/what-the-college-is-doing/carbon-energy/climate-action-plan

Sample pledge of action on climate and sustainability:
secondnature.org/climate-guidance/the-commitments/#climate-leadership-statement

II. Application to Form a Campus-based Chapter of the National Audubon Society

The application form can be found at:
audubon.org/conservation/campus-chapters

You will be asked to provide the following information:

- Names, contact information, major, class, and a statement of intention for each student officer
- Faculty advisor name and contact information

- Constitution (upload)
- Requirements set by your college/university



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www.audubon.org

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