



Audubon Science NEWS

FALL 2005

Audubon takes its place on global stage

Audubon, as the Partner for BirdLife International, is working to identify a network of sites that provide critical habitat for birds.



SUSAN WOODWARD / USFWS

Important Bird Areas often support a significant proportion of one or more species' total population. Aiktak Island, one of the Krenitzin Islands located just west of Unimak Pass in the Eastern Aleutian chain, hosts a large seabird colony, home to approximately 135,000 birds, and 11 different species.

WELCOME TO AUDUBON SCIENCE!

Audubon Science is integral to all Audubon does. Our roles are many—including identifying and prioritizing bird conservation issues and targets, developing programs and tools to achieve Audubon's bird and habitat conservation goals, and representing the organization in national and international conservation initiatives. To do our job, we rely on the support and involvement of people such as you that are committed to conservation. There's a lot happening here. I hope you'll enjoy reading our newsletter and learning about some of our activities. Please watch for our upcoming Annual Appeal; it's one way you can help us continue our work in conserving birds and habitats, and the ecosystems that support them.

Jesse
Tess Present, PhD
Acting Director of Science

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Science Programs—Updates
- 3 Ivory-billed Woodpecker Recovery • Bookshelf • PA Audubon News
- 4 Bid with your lid • Calendar of events note • Gift form

The Important Bird Areas Program (IBA) recognizes that habitat loss and fragmentation are the most serious threats facing populations of birds across America and around the world.

By working through partnerships, principally the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, to identify those places that are critical to birds during some part of their life cycle (breeding, wintering, feeding,

migrating) we hope to minimize the effects that habitat loss and degradation have on bird populations. Unless we can slow the rapid destruction of habitat, populations of many birds may decline to dangerously low levels.

In the U.S., the IBA program has become a key component of many bird conservation efforts.

The IBA program was initiated by BirdLife International in Europe in the 1980s. Since then, more than

continued on page 4

Think local, act global

Audubon's niche in the world of bird conservation is engaging people to find solutions to environmental issues through Citizen Science.

VISION

Audubon has a vision: to organize the birding equivalent of the Live 8 events of this summer, bringing together millions of birders from around the world, focusing their interests and influence on bird conservation. The good news is that Citizen Science participants around the globe, including those who take part in the Christmas Bird Count and Great Backyard Bird Count, already contribute records online. If you take part in one of these programs, you are already helping to build a global knowledgebase that

forms the cornerstone for us to become good stewards of the earth's biodiversity.

KNOWLEDGE AS THE BASE

Take a walk and look around you. Do you see how the natural world is under attack in your neighborhood? Biodiversity declines as people destroy, degrade, and sterilize habitats around the world every day. But do we know what is changing and at what speed?

continued on page 2



USFWS

PROMOTING A CULTURE OF CONSERVATION BY CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

AUDUBON SCIENCE OFFICE, 545 ALMSHOUSE ROAD, IVYLAND, PA 18974 • 215-355-9588 (tel) • 215-355-2353 (fax)

>> Sound knowledge is the foundation for taking action against the onslaught, and that's where you fit in. Asking questions, recording what you see and sending that information to an online database builds a real-time library of biodiversity and marks your place on the earth. This action is Citizen Science, and it harnesses the unique power of birds to inspire people to care about and to act on behalf of nature. Action is Audubon's goal, and Citizen Science is one way for you to get active for conservation.

INTERNET

The Internet presents a powerful and constructive opportunity to unite a dispersed human populace with its natural landscape. It collects enormous amounts of information about natural systems from many geographic locations. By engaging millions of people worldwide, we glimpse the "heartbeats" of natural systems, and pique countless individual human spirits in the process. The Internet enables two-way transfer of information, enabling you to enter your observations, see your results and answer the question: "where do I fit in to the bigger picture?" It also serves to multiply the value of your contributions by sharing them.

By counting and recording, you'll increase your appreciation of wildlife. You'll also contribute the goals of the program and to bird conservation globally. How? First, for example if you take part in a Christmas Bird Count, through our partnership with the U.S.G.S Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, new analysis of the information in Audubon's CBC database gives us information on changes in numbers for species for which we have no other source of information. This is especially true for northern breeding species such as the Northern Shrike. We have just discovered that populations have been declining 1.3 percent every year between 1966 and 2003. Knowing this can help us prioritize species for conservation action. You'll be able to read about new discoveries from CBC in our next State of the Birds report.

The CBC is but one thread in a broader tapestry of Citizen Science developments taking place around the

world, and into which Audubon will become integrated. Collaborating with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, we developed new programs; the first of these was the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), followed by eBird (just relaunched with lots of new features—go take a look at www.ebird.org). Meanwhile Audubon's Important Bird Areas program brings more birders to the table. IBAs are important in maintaining biodiversity, and monitoring changes at IBAs will involve Audubon Citizen Scientists. Each of these programs allow you to contribute locally to bird conservation. How about globally?

INTEGRATION

In the case of each locally coordinated IBA monitoring program, it rolls up into something bigger and by using standard methods we can, "roll up" its results to measure our success at a state, continental, or global scale. Citizen Science monitoring of birds at your local IBA then becomes a global act. It's that simple.

Increasingly, the information you send in online are stored on databases that are parts of a network. Databases talk to each other and can be queried from any location and form so-called metadatabases. Researchers will use these data to answer questions on changes in population numbers and distributions, communities, and biodiversity. Audubon and its partners will use this information to pinpoint causes of these changes, from global warming, pollution, habitat loss, and others.

SUMMARY

So think locally about how you can become engaged in Citizen Science projects. Know that you'll be acting globally as your information feeds into larger datasets with broader access to answer questions about the greater world in which we live.

An extended version of this article can be viewed at www.audubon.org/bird

DR PAUL GREEN, DIRECTOR OF CITIZEN SCIENCE
DR FRANK GILL, SENIOR ORNITHOLOGIST

SCIENCE PROGRAMS UPDATES

Important Bird Areas (IBAs)

The IBA program has identified 1,800 IBAs in the U.S., encompassing 69 million acres.

Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

The 105th CBC ran smoothly, with a fully functioning online interface and a record number of counts.

Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

New records from 52,000 checklists, with a total of 6.5 million birds, 613 species, over a four-days period.

CBC Analysis

Population trend analysis completed from 1966 through 2004 for all waterbirds that are frequently encountered on Audubon CBCs.

WatchList

The next state of the birds report will focus on population status and trends of waterbirds, including shorebirds and waterfowl.

Seabird Restoration

Despite extreme storms during the incubation period that destroyed many nests, the restored puffin colonies on Eastern Egg Rock and Seal Island NWR tallied 71 and 280 pairs respectively.

Coastal Bird Conservation

Now conducting field work on breeding and wintering plovers and terns from North Carolina to Texas.

International Programs

Entering a new era of international collaborations with our BirdLife Partners, Audubon's role in hemispheric bird conservation looks brighter than ever.

Audubon At Home (AAH)

Published 500,000 posters with guidelines for helping birds in five different urban and suburban landscapes.

Birds and Agriculture

The initial groundwork has been laid for building a network.



RALPH C. WRIGHT

JOHN & KAREN HOLLINGSWORTH / USFWS





IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER

rediscovered

Despite the remaining skeptics, there is strong evidence that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is alive in Arkansas. In response to this stunning news, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has put together the most complex structure of any recovery team in U.S. history. Audubon is represented on all of the numerous committees and teams with the exception of the Steering Committee. The key institutional players in the recovery are U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arkansas Game and Fish Department, The Nature Conservancy (especially the Southeast Region and the Arkansas state office), and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

The two top priority activities for Audubon within Arkansas are to help with the search for more birds and to help with education and outreach, especially to birders and the general public. The top priority outside of Arkansas is to search for Ivory-bills in areas within the historic range that are most likely to support them now. The best way to identify those areas is to use a Geographic Information System to analyze remotely sensed information to identify large patches of large trees. Historic information on the availability of large patches of large trees over the past 100 years would be helpful, since Ivory-bills are notoriously poor at dispersing through unforested habitat.

Once possible Ivory-bill habitat is developed, there should be a citizen science initiative to encourage volunteers to visit possible sites and to report on all birds encountered during the searches. Audubon has played a role in searching for the Ivory-bill in Cuba and has a relationship with Cuba through BirdLife as well as contacts made in the previous searches. Cornell is actively pursuing search opportunities in Cuba now.

Given all the excitement that the Ivory-bill is generating within and outside of Audubon, we would like to see our actions for the Ivory-bill be used as motivation for similar efforts for the

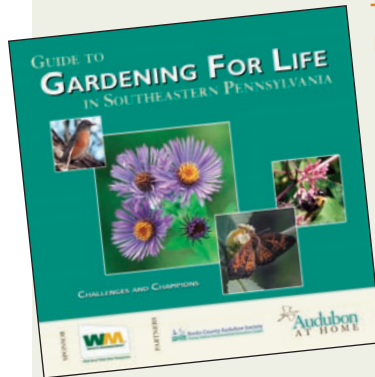
other globally threatened (Red WatchList) birds in the United States, especially including Hawaii. Many of these birds occur on the most important

bird areas in the United States. We should be looking for citizen conservation, citizen science, and public policy initiatives to help all of these top priority species.

You can learn more by visiting www.audubon.org/bird/ivory/challenges.php

DR. GREGORY S. BUTCHER
DIRECTOR OF BIRD CONSERVATION & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER RECOVERY TEAM

AUDUBON SCIENCE BOOKSHELF



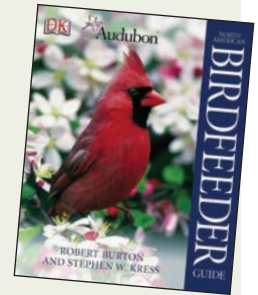
THE AUDUBON AT HOME GUIDE TO GARDENING FOR LIFE IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The book represents a successful yearlong collaboration between National Audubon Society, Bucks County Audubon, an Audubon chapter, and Audubon Pennsylvania, the state office, which also contributed to the guide's contents. It was made possible by Waste Management, whose "Think Green, Think Waste Management" aims to address conservation, energy, and land use issues throughout the country. This colorful and attractive guide contains tips to assist people to deal with water issues, exotic invasive plants, geese,

deer, and much more.. Please contact Steven Saffier, ssaffier@audubon.org or 215-355-9588 ext 22, to order a copy.

THE NORTH AMERICAN BIRDFEEDER GUIDE

One of the greatest pleasures of having even the smallest of gardens is to watch the variety of birds that visit throughout the year. Audubon's own Steve Kress has co-authored a new book with Robert Burton to assist bird lovers in attracting, feeding, and identifying the birds they see in their yards and gardens. The book includes a foreword by Kenn Kaufman, and is an inspirational and practical guide, to working hand-in-hand with nature to create a bird-friendly environment, whatever the size, style or location of your garden. Please contact Steve Kress, skress@audubon.org or 607-257-7308, to order a copy.



DEMONSTRATION GARDEN. JOHN JAMES AUDUBON CENTER AT MILL GROVE

Bringing people face-to-face with a working garden is perhaps the best way to inspire people to develop the potential of their own garden. The Mill Grove Habitat Garden trail serves as a progressive model of the contrast between traditional landscaping practices and the alternative healthy yard model. The self-guided trail takes visitors to various model gardens, from traditional to wildlife friendly, with interpretation that focuses on elements, processes, and relationships. The trail is set up to encourage repeat visits to see how wildlife uses the habitats at different times of the year. It is fitting that bird-friendly gardening is established as

an exhibit at the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove in Audubon, PA. It is the only remaining home of John James Audubon in the U. S. It operates as a museum, housing much of his artwork and serving as an education center, hosting hundreds of students and adults each year. For more information, call 610-666-5593.

www.audubon.org/chapter/pa/pa



Bid With Your Lid



Audubon was chosen as one of three participating organizations to receive a \$20,000 donation, plus a percentage of \$40,000 based on consumer voting! There are two ways to vote and support Audubon's efforts:

- Visit Stonyfield.com and enter one vote for Audubon and receive a downloadable coupon for a free cup of yogurt; or
- Collect these limited edition lids or any 6 oz. yogurt cup lids from Stonyfield Farm and receive a gift when you mail them (with your name and address, AND indicate your vote for Audubon) to: Stonyfield Farm, PO Box 4840, Manchester, NH 03108-4840.

10 lids = 10 votes, 20 lids = 20 votes; 30 lids = 30 votes.

Voting ends 31 October 2005. To learn more about this exciting promotion, visit Audubon.org or Stonyfield.com

Audubon takes its place on global stage • continued from page 1 • WWW.AUDUBON.ORG/BIRD/IBA

>> 7,500 sites in nearly 170 countries have been identified, with many national and regional IBA inventories published. Hundreds of these sites and millions of acres have received better protection as a result of the IBA Program.

The identification of IBAs is an important first step in larger bird conservation initiatives. IBA inventories provide a scientifically defensible method for prioritizing conservation activities and allocating limited conservation dollars to ensure the maximum benefit to birds.

The IBA Program offers opportunities for participation by volunteer, citizen scientists in projects such as IBA adoption and monitoring programs. Such participation promotes local stewardship and advocacy. The IBA program is therefore a starting point for site-based conservation efforts, and stakeholders are included in the process at many levels. You can help identify, adopt, monitor, and conserve Important Bird Areas. Learn more by visiting

www.audubon.org/bird/iba

JOHN CECIL,
IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS PROGRAM DIRECTOR



BE ON THE LOOKOUT
for our calendar of events

Audubon Science has a series of lectures and events planned for the fall and winter season. We will be mailing invitations to the events shortly.

HAL KORBER / PCC

Enclosed is a tax-deductible gift of \$ _____, payable to Audubon Science, to help protect and conserve habitat for birds and other wildlife and to educated people and involve communities in conservation.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Datytme phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Email address: _____

Please charge my: Visa MasterCard American Express

Card number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Name as it appears on the card: _____

Signature: _____

Please contact me/us about transferring appreciated stock

Please contact me/us about membership in The Lucy & John James Audubon Society

YOUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT TO US

What topics in this newsletter were of most interest to you? _____

What else would you like to know about Audubon Science and what we do?

THANK YOU!

PLEASE MAIL THIS FORM IN
THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO
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