Bird Advocate,

Thank you for joining Audubon California’s Virtual Advocacy Day on June 10, 2021, where you and members from across the state will connect with state legislators and urge them to take actions to conserve California’s natural landscapes, expand access to nature for all Californians, and implement bold programs to protect birds, other wildlife, and native plants.

Your advocacy comes at a time when the Legislature and the Governor are deciding on important legislation and how to allocate billions of dollars in the state budget that could be invested to benefit communities, natural resources, and resilience to climate change. It is essential that they hear from constituents like you.

This year’s toolkit focuses on remotely connecting with decision-makers, such as through video conferences and social media, as we continue to improve our methods for safe and inclusive advocacy. The toolkit has all you need to know to participate in Audubon California’s 2021 Advocacy Day, including our priorities, talking points, and a sample agenda for your meetings.

Here’s what you can expect leading up to June 10:

- **June 4, 2021:** Join our Advocacy Day training webinar from 12-1 pm. If you missed the training, you may see a recording of it [here](#).
- **June 7, 2021**:
  - Join the Audubon California Policy Team for open office hours from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm where we will be available to answer any questions you have. You can find the Zoom meeting link [here](#).
  - Audubon staff team leaders will email you with the confirmed time and call-in information for your meetings on June 10.
- **June 8, 2021:** Please RSVP to your Audubon California staff team leader before noon, Tuesday, June 8.

Audubon California staff are working hard to schedule meetings with state legislators. Most participants will have two to four meetings, at most (usually one each with their state Assembly and Senate members, then perhaps with one or two additional meetings with legislators whose districts overlap with your chapter’s region).

For any questions on Audubon California’s 2021 Advocacy Day, please contact Pedro Hernández, Outreach and Engagement Manager for Climate Policies at [pedro.hernandez@audubon.org](mailto:pedro.hernandez@audubon.org).

Thank you,

Pedro Hernández
Outreach and Engagement Manager for Climate Policies
Audubon California
**Audubon’s Advocacy Day Priorities & Talking Points**

This section of the toolkit provides you with an overview of how your meetings will run and the major points Audubon California wants to communicate to the legislators and their staffs.

**RUN OF SHOW**

The outline below provides a framework agenda for your meetings with legislators. Each meeting will be hosted by an Audubon staff member, who will provide the Zoom conference line and facilitate the meeting. Participants will volunteer to take one of the speaking roles identified below. Most meetings will be between 20-30 minutes.

Because of the high registration numbers, it’s possible that not every participant will have a speaking role, but the Audubon facilitator will try to include all participants as completely as possible. For smaller groups, speakers may have more than one role.

1. **Audubon participants sign onto the Zoom conference line at least 15 minutes ahead of the meeting schedule.**
   a. If you are a constituent, please let the Audubon staffer know ahead of time.
2. **Start the meeting** (Audubon staff)
3. **Introductions** (Audubon staff): invite the legislator or legislative office staffer to introduce themselves.
   a. For large groups (more than 6 Audubon participants), we encourage everyone to introduce themselves in the chat. For smaller groups, you may take time for everyone to say their name and chapter affiliation (if any).
4. **Item 1:** Access to nature for all Californians is essential to our health and wellbeing (Speaker 1)
5. **Item 2:** California must invest in natural and working lands climate solutions now. (Speaker 2)
6. **Item 3:** California has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to use the state budget to invest in natural resources, biodiversity, and climate resilience. (Speaker 3)
7. **Items 4 - 6:** For Assembly meetings, please see the Assembly Talking Points, and for the Senate meetings, please see the Senate Talking Points (Speakers 4-6)
8. **Wrap-up and thank yous** (Speaker 7 or Audubon staffer).
   a. Invite the legislator or legislative staffer to a bird walk or another event.
TALKING POINTS FOR ALL MEETINGS (SENATE & ASSEMBLY)

**Item 1: Access to Nature for All Californians Is Essential for Our Wellbeing**

- During the pandemic, nature has been a refuge and source of health for millions of Californians, from watching birds through our windows to walking around our neighborhoods.
- Lower-income areas and communities of color, already located in some of the most polluted sections of American cities, where they bear a disproportionate share of environmental health risks, from things like refineries, power plants, and other industrial activity.
- Lower-income areas and communities of color are also three times more likely to lack immediate access to nature and to live in “nature-deprived” communities.
- Environmental health hazards and lack of access to nature directly impact people’s quality of life, diminishing opportunities for education and economic growth and exacerbating chronic health problems, including asthma, diabetes, and pulmonary heart disease.

**Item 2: We Must Implement Natural Climate Solutions Now**

- We are already seeing the impacts of climate change in our communities, with increased wildfires, drought, and extreme heat events during the summer.
- Globally, nature is in crisis. We are rapidly losing biodiversity and most of the world’s most biologically important sites lack adequate protections or management.
- Audubon’s *Survival by Degrees* report found that 2/3rd of bird species in North America are at much greater risk of decline and extinction under current climate change models.
- However, if we take action to mitigate climate change and build resilience, most of those species can be saved.
- Audubon’s recent report found that conserving and restoring key priority areas across the country – including in California – can contribute up to 23% of the US’ commitment to draw down greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Governor’s 30x30 initiative and progress on the Natural Climate Solutions Strategy are key to building California’s natural resilience to climate change. We urge you to support both initiatives, especially through state budget actions and legislation.
- In California, we urge legislators to:
  - Keep our remaining natural systems intact and invest in protection and restoration programs. California’s program will be less expensive and more efficient if we protect remaining habitats through good land-use planning, enforcement of environmental laws, and incentive programs for landowners.
  - Support voluntary, incentive-based programs for private landowners, who steward most of the property that needs to be conserved to hit our goals. Programs such as Audubon Conservation Ranching are voluntary and provide
market-based incentives for landowners to improve practices, sequester carbon, and enhance biodiversity.

- Expand protections for coastal habitats, including eelgrass and other subtidal habitats, that can sequester carbon, provide critical habitat, and protect the coastline from sea level rise and other climate impacts.

Item 3: The State Budget & Birds

- This year’s California budget surplus offers an important moment to act for the environment and climate resilience. Audubon strongly supports new investments proposed by the Governor for key departments, including the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Water Resources, but urges the Legislator to increase funding in key departments such as the Coastal Commission, which has received cuts in recent years.
- California is already rapidly losing its biodiversity and the state has under-invested in natural resources for decades. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest in key programs to conserve biodiversity and expand access to nature.
- The final budget package needs to invest in protecting biodiversity and conserving sensitive habitats. While the Governor has committed the state to conserve 30% of its lands and water by 2030, we need adequate financial investments to achieve that goal.
- Therefore, we are asking the Legislature and the Governor to ensure that the final state budget includes:
  - $50 million to the Department of Conservation to implement a sustainable conservation ranching practice grant program. Collaborative initiatives between our state and community partners are increasingly important to meet our climate goals, maintain a healthy ecosystem and ensure we provide the opportunity for sustainable ranchers and land managers to save the grasslands that benefit all Californians.
  - $100 million for projects to benefit the Pacific Flyway, such as wetland and riparian restoration projects
  - $250 million for projects to reduce dust and create habitat at the Salton Sea, to ensure authentic engagement with local communities and build lasting habitat restoration projects.
  - $10 million to the Department of Fish & Wildlife to monitor the impacts of drought on wildlife and birds along the Pacific Flyway to better improve water management decisions and flexibility.
  - $10 million to the Department of Fish & Wildlife to reduce human-wildlife conflicts, especially for Tricolored Blackbirds that nest on farmlands, creating undue burdens for farmers and risks for a sensitive species.
  - Full funding for the California Coastal Commission to carry out its mission to protect the state’s coastline, especially given the growing challenge of sea level rise and other climate impacts.
ASSEMBLY MEETING TALKING POINTS

Bills generated in the Senate have passed out of that house and are now being considered by the Assembly. Therefore, we will be discussing the following Senate Bills (SB) with Assembly offices.

**Senate Bill 624: The Environmental Equity and Outdoor Access Act (Hueso)**

SB 624 would make it the policy of the State of California to promote inclusivity and ensure all Californians have safe access to the outdoors. It would further direct targeted actions to prioritize communities of color, disadvantaged communities, and others to reduce barriers to access to the outdoors and decrease exposure to environmental health risks. Our talking points for this bill are:

- During the pandemic, nature has been a refuge and source of health for millions of Californians, from watching birds through our windows to walking around our neighborhoods.
- Lower-income areas and communities of color, already located in some of the most polluted sections of American cities, where they bear a disproportionate share of environmental health risks, from things like refineries, power plants, and other industrial activity.
- Lower-income areas and communities of color are also three times more likely to lack immediate access to nature and to live in “nature-deprived” communities.
- SB 624 is an important step forward in the State recognizing that all Californians deserve equal access to nature and its benefits and to reducing exposures to environmental health hazards among people of color and in disadvantaged communities.
- SB 624 also furthers the Governor’s Executive Order from October 2020, in which he committed the state to conserving 30% of its lands and water for nature by 2030 and expanding equitable access to the outdoors for all Californians.

**Senate Bill 1: Coastal resources: sea level rise (Atkins)**

SB 1 will expand the California Coastal Commission’s role in responding to, planning for, and assisting local agencies to plan for sea level rise and authorizes up to $2,000,000 per year for sea level rise planning, with at least $500,000 to serve disadvantaged communities. It will also expand collaboration and information related to sea level rise with a new statewide partnership, regional support, and a website for planning and hosting date for sea level rise.

- California’s coastline is one of the state’s most valuable natural resources, providing access to nature and many recreational, educational, and economic opportunities for millions of Californians.
- Sea level rise will severely impact California’s coast, eroding beaches, decreasing habitat, and threatening homes and communities along the coastline.
  - California’s 19 coastal counties generated over $650 billion in wages and $1.7 trillion in 2012 and California’s ocean-related economies contributes to 12% of
the US GDP in 2012 (according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 2015).

- California could see property losses of 8 to 10 billion along the coastline by 2050 if the current rise of sea level rise continues.
- California’s coastline is home to many threatened and endangered species, including the California Least Tern and the Western Snowy Plover, both of which will suffer further due to loss of beaches and other impacts from climate change.

- Local governments need technical and financial assistance planning and preparing for sea level rise, especially for disadvantaged communities.
- SB 1 expands the California Coastal Commission’s capacity in helping local communities across the state prepare for climate change.
- SB 1 also invests at least $2 million every year, with $500,000 dedicated to planning to benefit disadvantaged communities.
- California is behind in planning to protect its coastlines from sea level rise. Audubon urges legislators to act now and to ensure that natural climate solutions are part of our coastal climate resilience efforts.

**Senate Bill 433: California Coastal Act of 1976: enforcement; penalties (Allen)**

SB 433 would increase the enforcement capacity of the California Coastal Commission to protect fragile ecosystems, sensitive wildlife, and public access along the coast.

- California has over 1200 miles of coastline, the majority of which is owned and managed by the State of California.
- Out of California’s 38 million residents, approximately 26 million — or about two-thirds — live within in coastal portions of the state.¹
- California’s tidelands are held in the Public Trust for the People of California, and access to and care for the coastline is of interest to all Californians.
- California’s coasts
- California’s coastlines will be hard hit by climate change and sea level rise, putting sensitive ecosystems and wildlife populations at greater risks of loss and fragmentation.
- SB 433 will provide the California Coastal Commission with a greater ability to enforce the Coastal Act to protect the state’s coastline, which is especially important given the growing threats to the coast from loss of habitat, sea level rise, and other impacts related to climate change.

¹ [https://coast.noaa.gov/states/california.html](https://coast.noaa.gov/states/california.html)
SENATE MEETING TALKING POINTS

Assembly bills (AB) have passed out of that house and are now being considered in the California senate. We will be discussing the following Assembly Bills with Senate offices:

**Assembly Bill 284: California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: climate goal: natural and working lands.** (R. Rivas)
The California Air Resources Control Board (CARB) is authorized to set climate goals for the State of California, including to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. AB 284 would direct CARB to establish a goal for carbon emission reductions and sequestration on natural and working lands, such as open space, parks, forest lands, rangelands, and farms. It will also require CARB to identify methods to achieve that goal.

- California has set ambitious goals to achieve carbon neutrality and has identify natural and working lands as essential to meeting those goals.
- Investments in natural and working lands not only can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon, but also can provide multiple benefits through clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, flood control, and recreational and economic activity.
- Audubon knows that we cannot conserve bird populations in California and we cannot meet our climate goals without aggressive actions to protect, enhance, and restore natural areas, parks, open space, farms, and rangelands.
- SB 284 is an essential step forward because until CARB establishes goals for natural and working lands, the state cannot generate and invest in natural and working lands climate solutions.
- SB 284 is also necessary to implement the Governor’s Executive Order from last October, wherein he prioritized natural and working lands solutions and committed the state to conserving 30% of its lands and waters for nature by 2030.

**Assembly Bill 1395: Carbon Neutrality** (Muratsuchi and C. Garcia)
AB 1395 would direct California Air Resources Board to identify and recommend measures to achieve carbon neutrality as part of the Scoping Plan.

- California is on the frontlines of the climate crisis. Last year alone, one out of every 25 acres in the state burned, we once again face a crippling drought, and increasingly hotter summers pose grave health risks, especially for vulnerable populations.
- To stave off even more catastrophic impacts, the science is clear that we must accelerate our efforts to reduce greenhouse gases and reverse the buildup of greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere through carbon removal and sequestration.
- We must reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 90% from 1990 levels by 2045 to avoid the worst-case scenarios for global temperature increases and climate change impacts.
• AB 1395 would make it the policy of the state to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 and direct the California Air Resources Control Board (CARB) to develop a scoping plan and identify technologies to achieve this goal.
• The bill ensures that the state considers all options, including available and emerging technologies, and prioritizes nature-based solutions to draw upon California’s abundant natural and working lands as carbon sinks.
• This bill does not limit technological solutions, instead it helps focus our efforts on nature-based solutions while technological innovations can scale up.
• California is falling behind leading jurisdictions such as Washington State and New York. AB 1395 reasserts California’s climate leadership by codifying the state’s goal to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible, but no later than 2045, and to achieve and maintain net negative greenhouse gas emissions thereafter.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

**Climate Change: A Continued Threat to California’s Birds & Communities**

Audubon California’s 2021 Advocacy Day is focused on advancing policies to reduce the impacts of climate change and build more resilient communities of birds and people.

Our *Survival by Degrees* report concludes that nearly two-thirds of bird species in North America are at greater risk of extinction due to impacts from climate change, which are exacerbating long-existing challenges to birds such as habitat loss, pesticide use, and other human-caused threats. These various climate change factors include:

- **Extreme heat**: Many bird species are affected by heat stress, which can kill birds, reduce populations, and decrease local species richness.
- **Fire weather**: Increased frequency of wildfires leads to mortality, displacement, and population declines for some species.
- **Droughts**: Droughts are expected to increase in frequency and severity under climate models, which will result in further loss of the habitats, prey, and other conditions birds need to thrive. It will also exacerbate conflicts between uses of water for farming, urban areas, and environmental needs.
- **Sea level rise**: Coastal areas will experience significant habitat loss over time as nesting sites become inundated or transition to different habitat types. Coastal species will also suffer in the short term as flooding becomes more frequent, leading to direct mortality of chicks as nest and burrows are affected.
- **Heavy rainfall**: Altered precipitation patterns are already changing how and when birds migrate, forage, and nest. This may cause further disruptions in species’ populations and survivability.

We also know that if we implement policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and safeguard important habitat, we can benefit up to 76% of the vulnerable bird populations identified in *Survival by Degrees* as being at higher risk due to climate change. Solutions that Audubon continues to advocate for include:

- **Nature-based solutions** can sequester carbon and provide essential habitat for wildlife. These solutions include reforestation and sustainable forestry practices, improvements to grasslands management and conservation-based ranching, and wetland preservation.
- **Establishing sustainable communities** that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve green infrastructure, and provide cleaner air and water to everyone.
- **State and national efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions**, including establishment of carbon markets that incorporate essential elements to reduce emissions in communities that have been most affected by air pollution.
- **Global coordination and cooperation** to set international goals and a system of accountability to reduce emissions rapidly.
- **Supporting a transition to 100% clean electricity** in a way that minimizes negative impacts to birds, land, and communities.
The Art of Speaking with a Legislator

In general, meetings with legislators are brief, so speakers should make sure every moment counts. A few key tips are:

- **Lead with what is important.** Start with main points, then give background if appropriate and there is time.
- **Less is more.** Stick to simple, clear messages and repeat them often.
- **Use plain language.** Avoid overly technical terms, jargon, or acronyms.
- **Be responsive.** Listen to the questions posed and let the discussion have a natural flow, but make sure you deliver the main message.

When meeting with an elected official, take the following steps:

1. Be organized. Introduce yourself. If you are in a group, select one person to be the primary spokesperson for each bill or issue. If a member of your group is a constituent
2. Identify yourselves as representing Audubon and your local chapters.
3. Know your legislator. Research the background of your elected official(s). What personal interest do they have in your issue?
4. Determine the legislators’ position. Ask the decision maker(s) for some action or commitment: How will they vote? Will they take a stand for or against a proposal?
5. Allow time for questions. Encourage questions and answer them factually. If you do not know the answer, offer to find out and get back to the legislator.
6. Be courteous. Follow up with a thank you, in which you restate your position.
7. Keep in mind that decision-makers have many issues to consider every day. Very few are experts on all issues. They rely upon you to give them good, accurate information, and they are interested in the views of their constituents.
8. Thank the member and staff. Offer to follow-up as necessary. Ask to take a picture at the end of the meeting.

For video conferences, especially if there are several participants, it can be difficult for everyone to speak up at will. For Advocacy Day, Audubon California staff will help teams identify speakers for different parts of the discussion to avoid interruptions and to ensure we make the most of our time with the legislators and their staffs count.
Additional Online Resources:

- **Audubon Magazine Climate Issue**
  - Audubon Magazine published its October 2019 edition to fully highlight the theme of climate change as a pressing issue.

- **Audubon California Website Climate Tab**
  - A hyperlink to Audubon California’s website that features the most recent articles featuring a climate lens.

- **Survival by Degrees Report**
  - Survival by Degrees is a pivotal analysis of the various ways climate change is impacting birds in North America.

- **California’s Fourth Climate Change Assessment**
  - A joint report by several state agencies that addresses critical information gaps on climate change for the public and decision makers to build resilience of communities, infrastructure, natural systems, working lands, and waters.

- **California Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (CalBRACE)**
  - CalBRACE is a program run by the California Department of Public Health presents projections for local climate impacts to local populations in every California county to help local governments to address climate change and public health.

- **Facebook Town Hall**
  - A feature through Facebook that allows the user to input their address to identify all representatives from city council to congressional level.

Thank you again for your interest and support for Audubon California’s 2021 Advocacy Day!

For any questions, contact Pedro Hernández, Outreach and Engagement Manager for Climate Policies at pedro.hernandez@audubon.org