



## **Audubon Advocacy Week Toolkit 2023**

Thank you for joining Audubon California's Advocacy Week taking place June 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>. Your efforts are essential as Governor Newsom and the California Legislature are wrestling with challenges that will affect birds and people in the state for decades.

Chapters have always been a core strength of Audubon's advocacy. This year, we will focus on building chapters' skills to conduct advocacy throughout the year.

For Advocacy Week 2023, Audubon California staff will support chapter leaders in organizing, scheduling, and conducting meetings with elected officials. Chapter leaders will learn how to identify and contact their elected representatives and have all the tools needed to set up and conduct successful advocacy meetings.

Audubon advocates will focus on a few key opportunities to improve policies for birds this year, including reducing light pollution, improving management on California's disappearing grasslands and rangelands, and prioritizing billions in state budget and bond spending to build resilience for communities and bird populations as they endure growing challenges from climate change.

This toolkit has all you need to know to participate in Audubon Advocacy Week, including our legislative priorities, talking points, sample agenda for your meetings, and social media posts you can share. Because all these bills are still being actively considered and voted on by the Legislature, some may change by the time you have meetings. We will continue to keep this updated and share the latest on bills and talking points before your meetings.

For any questions, please contact me at [Mike.Lynes@audubon.org](mailto:Mike.Lynes@audubon.org).

Thank you,

Mike Lynes  
Director of Public Policy  
Audubon California

## Important Dates and Training Opportunities

### **May 10 at 12:00-1:00 p.m. Advocacy Week Training**

Join our Advocacy Week training webinar from 12-1 pm. You can join with these ZOOM details:

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://audubon.zoom.us/j/94396686680?pwd=a01SWWNpWGxmVXNOUGVlbjpwOWDBkUT09>

Meeting ID: 943 9668 6680

Passcode: 409205

One tap mobile: +13017158592,,94396686680#,,,,\*409205# US (Washington DC)

If you miss the training, please check your email for a recording for you to view at your convenience.

### **May 12 and 19: Advocacy Week Prep Open Office Hours**

The Audubon California Policy Team will be available via Zoom to answer any questions you have at the following dates and times:

- May 12, 2023, 12:00-1:00 pm
- May 19, 2023, 12:00-1:00 pm

You will be able to join the meeting by clicking here (or check your email for the full link).

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://audubon.zoom.us/j/94592645513>

One tap mobile: [+16699006833,,94592645513#](tel:+16699006833,,94592645513#)

Meeting ID: 945 9264 5513 (no passcode)

Mike Lynes and Samantha Samuelson are also available to discuss Advocacy Day 2023 with any chapter leader, chapter committee, or member at their convenience. Please contact us at [Mike.Lynes@audubon.org](mailto:Mike.Lynes@audubon.org) and we can arrange a time to meet.

### **Starting May 15, 2023: Chapter leaders can schedule meetings with legislative offices.**

During the training session, Audubon staff will explain how chapters can reach out to their elected officials' offices to set up meetings.

**Starting June 19, 2023:** Audubon chapters and members will hold meetings with legislators and their staffs.

## How to Contact Members of the State Legislature and Set Up Meetings

It can be intimidating to reach out to your elected officials to set up a meeting, but it is a simple process that can be accomplished with a few steps. Elected officials appreciate hearing from constituents like you and this outreach is a key part of Audubon's strategy for enacting public policy to help birds and communities.

Here are the main steps for setting up a meeting with your elected representative:

- 1. Identity 2-5 (or more) members of your chapter to join you for this meeting.**
  - Meet to discuss the issues you would like to raise with the office and which participant will speak on a particular issue.
  - Identify the lead person who will be responsible for contacting your elected official's office to set up the meeting.
  - Identify dates and times that work for your group.
  - Agree as to whether you will try for an in-person meeting (in Sacramento or in the district) or via teleconference service (such as Zoom).
- 2. Identify your elected officials.**
  - You can search for your representatives using your address here: <https://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov>
  - You can also research which officials overlap with your chapter's borders by visiting here: <https://ca.audubon.org/about/california-chapters-and-legislative-boundaries> (it includes separate tabs for the California Assembly, Senate, and Congressional districts).
  - If your elected official's district overlaps
- 3. Schedule a meeting.** To schedule a meeting with your representative(s) follow the directions on their website (some prefer emails or that you fill out a form) and/or call their Capitol Office phone number.

Contact information for all Assembly members can be found here:

<https://www.assembly.ca.gov/assemblymembers>

Contact information for Senate members can be found here:

<https://www.senate.ca.gov/senators>

If you reach out and do not receive a response in two work days, call their office to follow up. Some offices may require additional follow-up to schedule a meeting.

**4. When you contact the office, be prepared to provide the following information:**

- The meeting organizer's name, address, and best contact information. For example:

“My name is Mike Lynes. I am a constituent and I can be reached at (415) 505-9743 or via email at [mike.lynes@audubon.org](mailto:mike.lynes@audubon.org).”

- Whether you would like to meet in person or via video conference. If your group is able to go to Sacramento, in person is now available and always preferred. But you can also request in-person meetings in your district (which can be more difficult to schedule).
- A short list of meeting date & time options that work for you and your group to meet with the elected official and/or their staff. For example:

“We are available to meet on June 19, 20, or 21, preferably in the morning. We can meet via Zoom and provide a link if you like. If none of those dates work for you, please let me know times that will work for your office.”

- 1-2 sentences describing why you are requesting the meeting. For example:  
“We would like to meet with Asm. Jones to discuss key opportunities to improve policies for birds this year, including reducing light pollution, improving management on California's disappearing grasslands, and prioritizing state budget and bond dollars for conservation to help birds and communities.”
- Be prepared if they say that the legislator is not available for a meeting. As if staff in the Sacramento or district office are available. While it's great to get a meeting with a member

**5. Reach out to your elected official(s) to schedule a meeting starting May 15<sup>th</sup>.** The earlier the better! If you have any questions and/or need assistance please reach out to [Mike.Lynes@Audubon.org](mailto:Mike.Lynes@Audubon.org) and [Samantha.Samuelsen@Audubon.org](mailto:Samantha.Samuelsen@Audubon.org).

**SAMPLE EMAIL TO SCHEDULE A MEETING:**

Dear [Insert Representative's Staff Name]:

I am reaching out on behalf of Sacramento Audubon Society to request an in-person meeting with Asm. McCarty on June 19th, 20th or 21st. We would like to discuss key opportunities to improve policies for birds this year, including reducing light pollution, improving management on California's disappearing grasslands, and prioritizing state budget and bond dollars for conservation to help birds and communities.

Four members of Sacramento Audubon that are constituents of Asm. McCarty are available to meet on June 19th, 20th, or 21st, preferably in the morning. We would prefer an in-person meeting, but can also meet via Zoom and provide a link if you like. If none of those dates work for you, please let me know times that will work for your office.

My name is Mike Lynes. I am a constituent and can be reached at (415) 505-9743 or via email at [mike.lynes@audubon.org](mailto:mike.lynes@audubon.org).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mike

## Advocacy Week Sample Meeting Agenda

The outline below provides a framework agenda for your meetings with legislators. One participant will volunteer to be the meeting facilitator while others will volunteer to take one of the speaking roles identified below. Most meetings will be between 20-30 minutes. It's possible that not every participant will have a speaking role, but the call facilitator will try to include all participants as completely as possible.

The agenda below provides guidance, but groups should work together to create an agenda that makes the most sense for their chapter and members. There are more detailed talking points for the budget and legislative issues on following pages.

1. **Sign in 15 minutes early!** Participants sign onto the Zoom conference line at least 15 minutes ahead of the meeting schedule.
  - a. If you are a constituent of the particular member that you're meeting with, please make sure the call facilitator knows ahead of time.
  - b. Optional: Download the Audubon ZOOM background here:  
<https://nationalaudubon.box.com/s/a9u2ohnw8nazkmnge190zpj0meoofbf>
2. **Start the meeting** (Group leader/Facilitator): Welcome people as they join.
3. **Introductions** (Group leader/Facilitator):
  - a. Group leader / Facilitator should introduce themselves. Ask up front if we can take a screenshot and share it on social media.
  - b. Invite the legislator or legislative office staffer to introduce themselves.
  - c. Introduce Audubon participants. Prioritize introducing any Audubon members that are constituents that live in the district for the office that you are meeting with.
    - i. For smaller groups, you may take time for everyone to say their name and chapter affiliation (if any).
    - ii. For large groups (more than 5 Audubon participants), we encourage everyone to introduce themselves in the chat. Please type your name and your chapter affiliation and/or where you live in the chat.
4. **Item 1:** (Speaker 1) Oppose the climate and natural resources budget cuts. We request this funding be restored OR no further climate and natural resource budget cuts are made.
5. **Item 2:** (Speaker 2) Support a climate and natural resources bond that includes funding for:
  - a. Protecting and restoring sensitive habitats, especially wetlands that are essential for birds on the Pacific Flyway and other wildlife.

- b. Advancing management practices on farms and ranches to create habitat, such as Audubon Conservation Ranching
  - c. Building resilience to climate change, especially on California's coasts that were hit so hard by storms in 2022 and 2023.
  
- 6. **Items 3 - 5:** (Speakers 3-5)
  - a. For Assembly meetings, please see the Assembly Talking Points, and
  - b. For the Senate meetings, please see the Senate Talking Points
  
- 7. **Wrap-up and thank you** (Speaker 6 or Group Leader)
  - a. Ask the legislator or staffer if they have other questions or would like follow-up.
  - b. Invite the legislator or legislative staffer to a bird walk or another event.
  - c. Take a screenshot!

## TALKING POINTS FOR ALL MEETINGS (SENATE & ASSEMBLY)

### **Issue 1: Audubon urges California legislators to oppose further budget cuts to climate and natural resource funding.**

#### ***Highlights of Budget Cuts:***

- Audubon understands that these are tough budget times, with a state budget deficit of over \$22 billion projected in January.
- Governor Newsom's proposed budget in January cut \$6 billion in climate and natural resource spending including:
  - \$485 million from the State Coastal Conservancy budget at a time when we need to making our coasts more resilient to climate change;
  - \$239 million reduction in funding to the Wildlife Conservation Board, which is the primary way we pay for large-scale restoration and conservation in the state, endangering efforts to conserve sensitive species and meet the state's 30x30 goals;
  - \$100 million reduction in 30x30 and nature-based solutions funding for the state conservancies; and
  - Additional Large cuts to programs for state and local parks, which will reduce Californians' access to nature and expose them to additional risks from climate events like extreme heat.

### **Issue 2: Audubon urges California legislators to support a Climate and Natural Resources Bond such as AB 1567 and SB 867.**

- Climate change is already harming our communities, with increased wildfires, drought, and extreme heat events during the summer.
- Audubon's science indicates that two-thirds 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.
- Conserving and restoring key natural and working lands, like forests, farms, and rangelands, can contribute up to 23% of the US' commitment to draw down greenhouse gas emissions.
- In California, we urge legislators to ensure that a final bond contains at least:
  - \$250 million to support wetlands protection and restoration to conserve Pacific Flyway bird populations;
  - \$500 million for the Salton Sea Management Program to meet the State of California's legal obligations to protect people and wildlife at the Sea;
  - \$2 billion in ocean and coastal investments;



- \$400 million for implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act to ensure communities have access to safe and affordable drinking water and that California's last wetlands are protected and thrive; and
- \$1 billion to the Wildlife Conservation Board for a wide range of conservation programs that include wetlands, rangelands, and deserts.

## ASSEMBLY MEETING TALKING POINTS

Bills originating in the Senate are now being considered by the Assembly. Therefore, we will be discussing the following Senate Bills (SB) with Assembly offices.

- Thank staff and members if they supported AB 38 (Lee) Save Our Night Skies Act and AB 720 (Addis) Conservation Ranching.
- You can verify whether the member voted in support of both measures by using the [California Legislative Information database](#).
  - To search, enter the bill number under “Quick Bill Search”.
  - Next select the “Votes” tab.
  - Identify the representative’s name under “Ayes”, “Noes”, or “NVR” (No Vote Recorded).

### **Senate Bill 337 (Min) Environmental protection: lands and coastal waters conservation goal.**

This bill will codify the global effort to conserve at least 30 percent of California’s land and coastal waters by 2030 here in California.

Talking points:

- Conserving the Earth’s lands and waters is one of the best tools we have to prevent further extinctions and protect biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- The scientific community has identified a need to conserve 50 percent of the Earth’s surface by 2050 to achieve these goals and the academic community has called for a step goal of 30 percent by 2030 to help spur action and measure progress.
- Codifying the 30x30 goal enshrines in state law the critical importance of meeting this conservation benchmark.
- A report published in 2022 by the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) on California’s progress to meet 30x30 identified 24 percent of California’s lands and 16 percent of its coastal waters are already conserved.
- The state needs to conserve another six million acres of lands and one-half million acres of coastal waters to achieve the 30x30 milestone.
- While the Newsom Administration has shown great leadership in adopting an ambitious goal in line with recommendations from the scientific community, the goal’s deadline will extend past this Governor’s term. Enshrining the goal in statute will ensure it persists until 2030

**Senate Bill 704 (Min) Coastal resources: California Coastal Act of 1976: industrial developments: oil and gas facilities: offshore wind.**

This bill closes a loophole in the California Coastal Act that allows oil and gas development, refineries, and petrochemical facilities to circumvent environmental protections standards otherwise applied to all other projects.

Talking points:

- Oil and gas development off California’s coasts harms birds and the marine environment, contributes to climate change, and presents threats to our coastal economy, such as we saw in the recent oil spill in Orange County.
- Californians want to move away from oil and gas development in the state and toward cleaner renewable energy that is well-sited and mitigated to avoid and reduce impacts to birds and other wildlife.
- Unfortunately, existing California law includes a loophole that makes it easier to permit oil and gas development along our coast.
- This bill would close the loophole and make oil and gas development more difficult in our coastal waters while encouraging the safe development of renewable energy resources in the coastal environment.

**Senate Bill 272 (Laird) Sea level rise: planning and adaptation.**

This bill encourages more robust sea level rise planning and adaptation by local governments and also requires the state’s ‘Sea Level Rise Leadership team’ consisting of 17 California state entities to offer guidance to local governments in their planning efforts.

Talking points:

- 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 more support to tackle the immense technical and financial challenges presented by climate change. SB 272 will help local communities be safer and more economically plan to adapt to rising sea levels and other climate challenges.

## 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 720: California Rangeland, Grazing Land, and Grassland Protection Program: grants for local programs. \(Addis\)](#)

AB 720 includes grants for conservation ranching under the existing Rangeland, Grazing Land, and Grassland Program administered by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB).

Our talking points for this bill are:

- Grassland bird species are some of the most imperiled in North America, with a 52% reduction in grassland bird species since 1970, mostly due to loss of habitat.
- California's rangelands cover 41% of the state, but we are losing them at a rate of 20,000 acres each year.
- Audubon's conservation ranching program is active in 15 states and has demonstrated that ranchers can implement practices that improve ecological outcomes on rangelands and support successful business.
- AB 720 builds on the ongoing work of WCB and community partners by offering financial incentives to California ranchers and other private landowners to implement grazing practices that restore grassland habitat, soil health, and biodiversity on some of California's most endangered and sensitive landscapes.
- Benefits include improving soil health, sequestering carbon in healthy grassland systems, and reducing fire risks.
- AB 720 has broad, bipartisan support, no one has opposed it.
- Please support SB 720 when it comes to the Senate floor later this month.

### [Assembly Bill 38: Save Our Night Skies Act \(Lee\)](#)

AB 38 limits outdoor night lighting on state buildings to promote safety for people, ecosystems, and other wildlife. In addition, this reform conserves energy and reduces our carbon footprint.

Talking points:

- The bill requires state owned and operated buildings to install light fixtures that reduce unnecessary light pollution.
- Unnecessary light pollution is a growing ecological problem that harms wildlife and people. It can disrupt animals' breeding, migratory, and feeding patterns and contribute to habitat degradation and population declines.
- 70% of birds in North America migrate, and 80% do so at night, when they can be disrupted by artificial light. Artificial lights can pull birds off their migratory routes, disrupt feeding behaviors, and result in collisions with buildings and other structures.

- The International Dark Sky Association estimates that 30% of night light is wasted. It not only disrupts people and wildlife, it also wastes electricity and money, and results in excessive greenhouse gas emissions.
- Electrical engineers that design and implement light projects testified in the Assembly Natural Resources Committee that lighting fixtures that reduce light pollution have no appreciable cost difference with traditional lighting fixtures and will save the state money over time.
- AB 38 also includes exemptions to protect human health and safety, property, and emergency responders.
- AB 38 is an excellent first step that will conserve energy, save taxpayer money, and protect darker skies to benefit people and wildlife. We ask for your support.

### **[AB 1407 \(Addis\) Coastal resources: ocean recovery and restoration: large-scale restoration](#)**

This bill requires OPC to develop a framework that has a goal of restoring at least 5,000 acres of kelp forests, 16,000 acres of eelgrass meadows, and 9,000 acres of native oyster beds by 2050.

Talking points:

- Despite the economic, ecological, and cultural importance of key habitats like kelp forests, eelgrass meadows, and native oyster beds, these habitats are in decline due to coastal development, pollution, climate change.
- California needs to implement intentional, active intervention to combat these ongoing and accelerating threats and restore at the ecosystem level.

## Speaking with a Legislator and their Staff

In general, meetings with legislators and their staffs 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 Week, 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.

## Social Media Toolkit

We invite you to advocate to your legislator via social media on Audubon Advocacy Week. Social media is a powerful way to send your message to important decision-makers. Many elected officials use Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to connect with constituents. Feel free to use the sample posts below. You can also share posts by Audubon California throughout the day!

### ► GRAPHICS

For your social media posts, we recommend sharing a photo from your ZOOM meeting or one of the graphics that promotes Audubon's sponsored legislation.

Download graphics here:

<https://nationalaudubon.box.com/s/1yl6ogujquml185epi9vick5aptbhfyg>







► **FACEBOOK**

- Thank you @ [your legislator’s Instagram handle here] for meeting with Audubon members [OR Insert Audubon Chapter Name] as part of Audubon Advocacy Week 2023. We enjoyed our discussions on conservation ranching and curbing light pollution! Together, we will protect California’s birds, rangelands, and communities. VOTE YES on AB 38 & AB 720.

- Grassland birds like Western Meadowlarks are in crisis. AB 720 will protect habitat for birds like the American Kestrel, Western Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, Acorn Woodpecker, and California Quail. We urge the California State Senate to VOTE YES on #AB720
- The Save Our Night Skies Act (AB38) ensures safe passage for birds that migrate by the stars. Every day in the U.S., one million birds die from collisions with buildings due to outdoor night lighting. Reducing artificial night light can prevent 60% of bird collisions! We urge the California State Assembly to VOTE YES on #AB38 to protect California's birds.

► **TWITTER**

- Thank you @ [your legislator's Instagram handle here] for meeting with Audubon members [OR Insert Audubon Chapter Name] to discuss conservation ranching & curbing light pollution! Together, we will protect California's birds, rangelands, and communities. VOTE YES on #AB38 #AB720
- Grassland birds like Western Meadowlarks are in crisis. AB 720 will protect habitat for birds like the American Kestrel, Western Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, Acorn Woodpecker, and California Quail. VOTE YES on #AB720
- The Save Our Night Skies Act (AB38) ensures safe passage for birds that migrate by the stars. Every day in the U.S., one million birds die from collisions with buildings due to outdoor night lighting. Reducing this light can prevent 60% of collisions! VOTE YES on #AB38
- Audubon scientists report that two-thirds of North America's birds are vulnerable to climate change - we need @ [insert your legislator's Twitter handle here] to invest in natural climate solutions now to reverse the direction of this massive threat:  
<https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees>

► **INSTAGRAM**

- Thank you @ [your legislator's Instagram handle here] for meeting with Audubon members [OR Insert Audubon Chapter Name] to discuss conservation ranching, protecting managed wetlands & clean drinking water, & curbing light pollution! Together, we will protect California's birds, rangelands, and communities. VOTE YES on #AB38 #AB720

- Grassland birds like Western Meadowlarks are in crisis. AB 720 will protect habitat for birds like the American Kestrel, Western Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, Acorn Woodpecker, and California Quail. VOTE YES on #AB720
- The Save Our Night Skies Act (AB38) ensures safe passage for birds that migrate by the stars. Every day in the U.S., one million birds die from collisions with buildings due to outdoor night lighting. Reducing this light can prevent 60% of collisions! VOTE YES on #AB38
- Audubon scientists report that two-thirds of North America's birds are vulnerable to climate change - we need @ [insert your legislator's Twitter handle here] to invest in natural climate solutions now to reverse the direction of this massive threat:  
<https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees>