

2020 Audubon Advocacy Day Remote Engagement Toolkit

Message to Audubon Network Membership

Bird Advocate,

Thank you for taking action for your community and for birds! Nature gives us clean drinking water, clean air, healthy food supplies, natural places where we can get outside, and is the critical habitat of many vulnerable bird species.

This toolkit is intended to help you increase your comfort talking about the impacts that climate change on birds and using tools to engage in advocacy, especially remote advocacy during this time when in-person meetings are not safe or practical.

While this was provided to help participants in our Advocacy Day on June 2, 2020, we hope you will find talking points, tips, and tools that you can apply any time in your advocacy.



Climate change presents one of the greatest challenges to people and wildlife and its impacts will worsen in the future. Audubon's recent report, [Survival by Degrees](#), demonstrates that nearly two-thirds of all bird species risk habitat loss and extinction due to climate change.

Audubon's network has proven that our advocacy make a positive impact for birds and communities. We are excited to engage in remote advocacy to support robust civic engagement for a healthy planet for all. We know that if we do not implement aggressive climate policies now – including investing in nature-based solutions-- the climate and health crises of the future will be even more catastrophic for people, our communities–, and birds.

For any questions on Audubon California's 2020 Advocacy Day, please contact Pedro Hernández, Outreach and Engagement Manager for Climate Policies at pedro.hernandez@audubon.org.

Thank you,

Pedro Hernández
Outreach and Engagement Manager for Climate Policies
Audubon California

Climate Change: A Threat to North America's Birds

Audubon California's 2020 Advocacy Day is focused on advancing policies to reduce the impacts of climate change and build more resilient communities of birds and people.

Audubon's *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 will be 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 policies that 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

Audubon's Advocacy Day Priority Legislation & Talking Points

Audubon California's annual Advocacy Day is on Tuesday, June 2, 2020. This year, we are focused on four main topics, all aimed at reducing the impacts of climate change on birds and people throughout the state. During calls with legislators, Audubon members will briefly discuss how climate change is affecting birds and people, and then ask for support for two bills, AB 3030 and AB 2619, and encourage legislators to protect natural resource programs as the state makes budget cuts due to the economic crisis.

Below are proposed talking points for each issue :

Climate Change and Natural Climate Solutions

- We are already seeing the impacts of climate change in our communities, with increased wildfires, drought, and rising temperatures during the summer.
- 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.
- We urge you to be a champion for **natural climate solutions**, which are improvements in how we protect and manage land to use nature to capture carbon, reduce emissions, and create more habitat for wildlife.
- We know that everyone's attention is on the COVID-19 crisis right now, but we ask that you also keep in mind that we must continue to make progress in reducing the impacts from climate change and making our state and residents more resilient to its impacts.
- We are supporting AB 3030 and AB 2619 because they help prepare California to better adapt to the impacts of climate change while protecting our wildlife, people, and economy.

AB 3030: Resource conservation: land and ocean conservation goals.

This bill would set establish that it is the goal of the State of California to have 30% of the lands and waters in the state be under some form of permanent protection by 3030.

Talking points:

- Internationally, Nature is in crisis. Biodiversity is plummeting and the challenges to conserving nature will grow with climate change and other human-induced impacts..
- California has lost over 90% of sensitive habitats such as wetlands, riparian corridors, and coastal sage scrub. We are rapidly losing grasslands and prime lands in our deserts too.
- In order to support more resilient populations of wildlife species and sustainable human communities, we need to protect and manage more land for nature.
- We support AB 3030, which sets it as a goal for the state to permanently protect 30% of California's lands and waters by 2030.
- AB 3030 does not create any new regulations or requirements and would assist the state and federal government prioritizing new lands and working on voluntary incentive programs with private land owns.
- Public lands and managing private lands for nature are essential to providing adequate habitat for wildlife and clean air, fresh water, and access to Nature for all Californians.

AB 2619: Program for Coastal Resilience, Adaptation, and Access

This bill would establish a fund to benefit projects and planning dedicated to increase coastal resilience to climate change and improve access to coastal resources for all Californians. The fund would be paid for from state revenues on oil and gas operations in state waters.

- California's coasts are a critical resource for all and are severely threatened by impacts from climate change.
- California's coastal communities are not prepared for sea level rise and coastal flooding due to climate change.
- Protection of coastal resources from sea level rise impacts provides national public benefits including flood protection, improved water quality, habitat for wildlife, recreational opportunity, and increased quality of life.
- Therefore, we urge you to support AB 2618 to create the Coastal Climate Resilience, Adaptation, and Access fund to ensure that the local and state agencies charged with preparing our coastal communities for climate change have the funding needed to make progress.

The State Budget & Birds

- We know that legislators and the Governor are wrestling with how to adjust the budget in order to respond to COVID-19 and the downturn in the state's economy.
- We also know that during past downturns, natural resource programs are often the first to be cut.
- Cuts to environmental programs result in harm to efforts to protect biodiversity, improve air quality, provide clean water, and ensure all Californians have access to nature.
- Outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism are also important parts of our state economy.
- While we know some cuts are inevitable, we ask you to stand up for nature and the environment so that cuts to environmental programs are not disproportionate or overly severe.
- California is already losing biodiversity and facing immense environmental challenges due to climate change and other human activities. While we have to right-size the budget, we should not make matters worse but cutting important programs right now.

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's 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 2020, 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.

Engaging Decision-makers to Take Action on Climate Change

Local, state, and federal elected officials and other decision-makers need to hear from constituents that care about birds and our communities about the threats of climate change and how we can start solving these challenges. Our tools include lobbying, calls to legislators, letters, email action alerts, online petitions, and other forms of outreach.

Right now, the COVID-19 crisis prevents us from gathering in person to organize and take action. But there are several ways to remain active and continue elevating critical issues for birds. Impactful actions described further below include:

1. Delivering brief, powerful messages on social media,
2. Organizing an effective call-in campaign,
3. Submitting a persuasive letter to the editor of your local newspaper, and
4. Setting up a video conference with elected officials and other decision-makers.

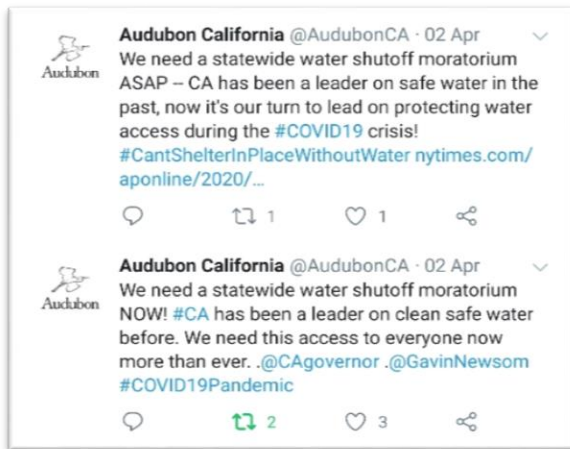
These are tools that may be put to use anytime and for any issue. We hope your engagement with Audubon California will continue well after June 2nd.

Social Media and Remote Engagement

Engaging on social media allows people to shape the narratives that currently impact birds and reach important decision-makers. Many elected officials and public influencers have engaged social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter in order to increase contact with constituents.

Ideally, social media content is concise but captures people's emotions and imaginations. With a good distribution plan and quality content, posts can rapidly reach an audience and increase awareness for calls to action. It's important that messages provide a solution or point to an opportunity for people who see the posts to engage.

The following posts provide examples of clearly describing issue, pointing to online action alerts, and using hashtags or tagging to get the attention of decision-makers:



Sample Tweets

Tweets should target specific decision-makers or groups, provide a brief call to action, and (ideally) include a popular hashtag that will make your tweet easier to find. The examples below are designed for our June 2, 2020 Advocacy Day (feel free to use them!). Be sure to tailor them to your specific messages and targets:

- @CAGovernor must take action for all birds and communities! California has been a leader on the environment and AB 3030 is another chance to do the right thing. We need bold action! #AB3030 #30x30
- @ [your legislator's Twitter handle here] has an opportunity to address the climate and conservation crises in California. Support AB 3030! Nearly two-thirds of birds are vulnerable to climate change and we need increased conservation efforts to reverse the direction of this massive threat. #AB3030 #30x30

- ACTION ALERT: AB 3030 from Assembly member @Ash_Kalra will be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee on June 3rd! Contact members of the Assembly Appropriations committee TODAY at (916) 319-2081 and urge them to conserve CA #AB3030 #CA30x30
- Thank you @ [your legislator's Twitter handle here] for meeting with [local Audubon chapter] to discuss the need to conservation and climate resilience! We look forward to working with you to ensure a healthy and resilient future for birds and communities. #AB3030 #CA30x30

Letter to the Editor or Op-Ed Talking Points

(Excerpt from the *Survival By Degrees* [Resolution Toolkit](#))

A key way to educate your community about your climate resolution campaign and build support is through letters to the editor or opinion editorial pieces submitted to the editorial page (“op-eds”). You can access more tips on writing a letter to the editor or op-ed in our [Campaign Advocacy Manual](#) but [here are a few key points.](#)

- A letter to the editor (LTE) can be submitted to a paper by anyone. They are usually brief, approximately 150-300 words. When writing a letter to the editor be sure to review your papers’ instructions on how to submit an LTE. Many papers have online submission forms now.
- Op-eds are generally written by a community leader or an authority, such as the chapter leader, elected official, or head of a civic association or nonprofit. They run longer (500-800 words). Often, a group such as an Audubon chapter, may draft the letter and then provide it to the community leader for their signature. Once the letter is ready to be published, the proponents contact the editorial department of the prioritized newspaper and discuss the submission with them.
- LTEs should be in your voice. Groups such as Audubon California may provide talking points, but it’s important that they are from individuals, and tailored to your community.

With that in mind, here are some talking points for an LTE or op-ed advocating for the adoption of *Survival by Degrees*-based climate resolutions by local government:

- Audubon’s science shows that 139 bird species in the Pacific Flyway are at risk of extinction from climate change.
- If we take action now we can improve the chances for 76% of species at risk.
- Climate change itself is only one part of the story. In the lower 48 states, 97% of species could be affected by two or more climate-related impacts, like sea level rise, early springs, and fire weather.

- We already know what we need to do to reduce global warming and we already have many of the tools and solutions we need to do that. We need more people committed to putting these solutions into practice
- [Local community] needs to take action by passing a resolution calling for state and federal climate legislation
- Include a way to localize the issue—how climate is affecting your community, or if your resolution highlights a particular aspect of your region

Scheduling Video Calls with Decision-Makers

For Advocacy Day, Audubon Staff is setting up meetings but we encourage to contact your elected representatives well beyond our event.

This year, many officials and organizations have shifted to online video platforms like Google Hangout, Skype or Zoom. In our efforts to support civic life and elevate bird priorities, Audubon is utilizing Zoom as a platform to meet directly with the offices of state representatives.

These video call platforms allow a user to schedule, host, or join remote meetings for personal or professional use. A link and call-in number can be generated and sent via email to proposed participants. Meeting attendees can stream the video call from a computer or cell phone. For people without the ability stream video, these platforms also provide a call-in telephone and numerical meeting identification number.

Someone must serve as the host for the call (usually the organizer, who scheduled the meeting and sent out the call information). The organizer should know who else will attend and prepare everyone for specific speaking roles or presentations, as is appropriate.

If you or your chapter would like to host a call with an elected official, we recommend the following steps:

- 1) Identify the issue or issues you want to raise on a call.
- 2) Identify the elected or agency officials with whom you want to meet via video call.
- 3) Identify and understand the video call platform (Zoom, Google, Skype, etc.) that you intend to use. We suggest you do a practice call using the platform to ensure you understand how to use the software before your advocacy call with the official.
- 4) Contact the scheduler for the target of the meeting. It is best to call their office and ask for their availability. Email may work as well. Be persistent but polite if the scheduler does not readily return calls or emails.
- 5) Once the date and time is set, send an email invitation with the video call link and call-in information to all participants.
- 6) Before the call with the elected official, prepare participants from your chapter. You may hold a preparatory call to set an agenda for the call, discuss the issues, identify who will speak and their speaking order, , and the tone and message you want to strike during the call. It is also advisable to set expectations for behavior for participants, including staying on mute when not speaking, not interrupting speakers, and decorum if the chat feature is used.

- 7) Hold the call (see roles below).
 - a. Hosts will
 - i. Start the meeting a few minutes early
 - ii. Facilitate the meeting to keep to the agenda and messaging
 - iii. May mute or un-mute attendees needed
 - iv. Manage screen sharing, to show pictures of graphics, may also create polls and break out rooms if necessary
 - b. Attendees will
 - i. Abide by the agreed-upon rules of behavior and messaging
 - ii. Mute themselves when they are not speaking
 - iii. Utilize the chat function appropriate
- 8) Follow-up with your representative's office to thank them and take further action as necessary
- 9) After the call, evaluate what was successful about the call how future calls might be improved.

For additional information on Zoom, please visit [Zoom Help Center: Joining a Meeting](#).

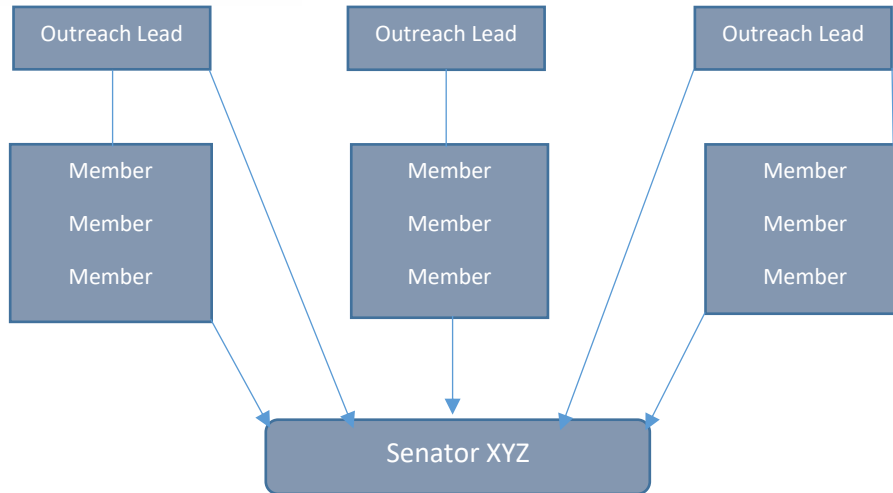
Organizing Call Parties to Mobilize the Audubon Network

Advocacy networks often need to mobilize quickly to contact a specific target. The phone tree model is one of the best methods to rapidly contact your network and elected officials directly. If utilized effectively, this model supports staging engagement activities from constituents over a sustained period, helps demonstrate widespread support, and develops relationships with representatives.

Audubon California is not organizing phone trees for its Advocacy Day on June 2nd. But we're providing this model in case you find it useful for organizing your chapter on an issue in the future. Audubon California staff is happy to assist you in putting together a phone tree plan for your chapter.

The phone tree model shown below can be used for other network engagement activities such as emails, text chains, or letter writing campaigns. Using this structure also helps support internal organization of chapters to distribute messages, respond in real-time to political developments, and to strategically exert pressure on various decision-makers. Below is an example of a potential arrangement of one phone tree where a network is mobilized to target one elected official's office:





Clear roles are also necessary to ensure effective communication. A suggested role allocation can include:

Coordinator(s)

- Identify the targets (usually elected or agency officials) for the call effort,
- Develops messaging (usually in partnership with other participants) and writes the scripts used by the callers,
- Coordinates with Outreach Leads to develop a plan to engage the network, which can be a simple document that identifies the purpose of the call-in campaign, key messaging, important dates and times, and contact information for participants,
- Establishes expectations for participants, including the tone and content of outreach, and
- Provides additional support to Members or Outreach Leads where needed.

Outreach Lead(s)

- Trains and manages a team of participants (“members”) who will make the calls,
- Responsible for connecting to 5-10 people
- Conveys results to Coordinator

Member / Participant(s)

- Review the messaging, including the script or talking points for the calls,
- Make their assigned calls, and recruits and activates additional potential participants.

Sample Sentence Frames for Phone Tree Model Engagement

The call script should be simple and to the point. The callers should identify themselves, state if they are a constituent and/or affiliated with an Audubon chapter, and ask the

target to take an action, such as supporting legislation. The text below provides an example and can be customized for any issue:

Hello, my name is (*First Name / Last Name*) and I am calling as a constituent and as a member of (*Affiliated Organization*) to urge (*Elected Official's Name*) to support AB 3030 and protect natural resources and the environment from severe budget cuts. AB 3030 protect California's birds and other wildlife, improve access to nature for everyone, and make California more resilient to climate change. There are vulnerable species of bird in our district and we need robust conservation policies to support the ecosystems that support our communities and wildlife.

Thank you for your time,

(Audubon Network Member)

Frequently Asked Questions for Advocacy Day

Who will schedule our meetings?

Audubon California staff will schedule the meetings with representatives and ensure Advocacy day participants have the necessary meeting information.

Are the webinars essential to participate in Advocacy Day?

We strongly encourage attendance of our Advocacy Day preparation webinar from 12:00-1:00 p.m. on Friday, May 29th, where we will discuss policy updates and other details for the Advocacy Day on June 2nd Advocacy Day. The other webinars are strongly encouraged but not necessary. Attendance allows the opportunity to learn about our work, engage in interactive components, and ask questions but each webinar will also be recorded and shared with the Advocacy day participants.



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.
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Thank you again for your interest and support for Audubon California’s
2020 Advocacy Day!

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