

“The work that Mass Audubon does in the next several years is likely to be seen 100 years from now as critical in the effort to protect New England’s biodiversity and natural beauty.”

E.O. Wilson, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Pellegrino University Professor Emeritus, Harvard University



Strategic Plan 2015



Mass Audubon
Protecting the Nature of Massachusetts





“*E*ach land project that we complete,
each scientific survey that we conduct,
each wildlife sanctuary that opens its
doors to children and adults, and every
government policy we shape brings to
life the responsibility we all share for
the natural world. The legacy we leave
for future generations depends on what
we do now, as individuals, volunteers,
members, donors, landowners, and
concerned citizens.”

***Laura Johnson, President,
Mass Audubon***

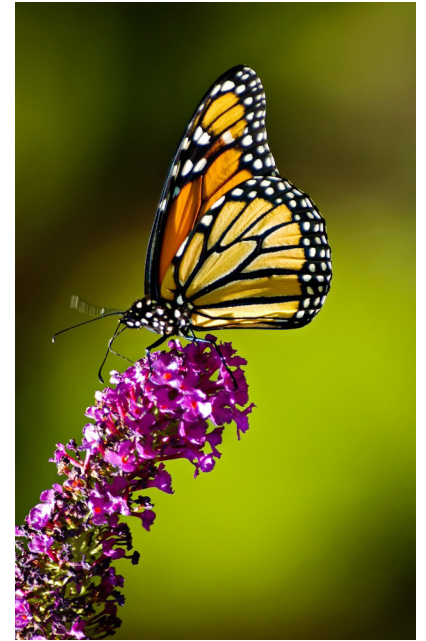
Strategic Plan 2015

Mass Audubon's Strategic Plan 2015 confirms our mission **to protect the nature of Massachusetts for people and for wildlife**, while recognizing and addressing the recent and extraordinary turmoil in the nation and the world. It is in times like these that the residents of Massachusetts especially count on what we have to offer. In fact, the unprecedented changes have tested and confirmed our certainty that our mission continues to be a powerful force in today's world. For people looking to have a positive impact on our environment and on our quality of life, there is no better, more relevant, more committed organization than Mass Audubon and no more important time than now.

Mass Audubon remains dedicated to our guiding strategies: **conservation, education, and advocacy**. Over the past century, we have consistently employed these strategies as catalysts to preserve the wildland and wildlife in Massachusetts. This broad-based approach distinguishes Mass Audubon from other organizations and is integral to our success. It has made us a national—indeed international—model for stimulating and engaging individual and institutional environmental awareness, concern, and action.

Our mission is broad, and we acknowledge that we will be most effective if we focus our efforts on addressing the major threats to the nature of Massachusetts. As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, we view three environmental threats as most significant to our work across the state: Loss of Connection to Nature, Habitat Loss, and Climate Change.

Mass Audubon has a unique role in engaging and motivating people across all populations, locations, abilities, and interests to learn about, enjoy, and become inspired to act to protect the nature of Massachusetts. We feel the urgency and importance of our work as never before, and, guided by the goals of our Strategic Plan 2015, we will carry out our mission with tenacity and conviction.





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Great Marsh Rough Meadows

VISION

Mass Audubon embraces a vision of our state in which nature—whether found in a city park or deep inside the forests of western Massachusetts or within an urban greenway or along the 1,500 miles of Massachusetts coastline—is valued as essential to quality of life, and where people live with appreciation and respect for the complex ecological systems that sustain life on earth, working together to ensure that they are protected.

VALUES

Love of Nature

We value the diversity and resilience of nature and treasure its beauty. Nature sustains and renews us, provides unexpected moments of joy, and inspires our daily work.

Passion and Commitment

We are committed to nature and to people. We share our passion with others to connect people with nature and to inspire everyone to be stewards of the environment.

People and Community

We care deeply about our colleagues, our partners, our members, and the communities with whom we work. We learn from their experience, expertise, and beliefs, and together we build conservation communities that welcome and respect all people.

Inspiring Action

We believe that every person can make a positive difference. Through education, personal discovery, and transformational experiences, we foster a conservation ethic in current and future generations.

Credibility

We bring expertise, sound science, long-term thinking, and community knowledge to solve pressing and important environmental challenges. Our personal and organizational integrity serves as a foundation for our work.

Teamwork

We work together to embrace opportunities and challenges in an ever-changing world. We encourage creativity, innovation, and action, while respecting individual points of view.



STRATEGIC GOAL 1:

CONNECT PEOPLE AND NATURE



Chickatawbut Hill

The Challenge

One of the major trends of the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century is the erosion of the bond between people and nature. Increasingly, there is recognition that we must heal this breach, not only because nature enriches our lives aesthetically and spiritually, but because our mental, emotional, and physical health is deeply connected to nature.

This is especially true for our children. Too many Massachusetts residents are overloaded with information, yet are disconnected from the world that sustains them. Many parents fear the outdoors as a source of danger for their children. Others live in cities where nature is viewed as being somewhere else and not relevant to their lives.

Engage and motivate people to learn about and enjoy the natural world, and be inspired to act to protect the nature of Massachusetts.

Mass Audubon's network of nature centers and wildlife sanctuaries, located in different communities and protecting diverse habitats, is our defining and distinctive attribute as a statewide conservation organization. Wildlife sanctuaries have stewardship responsibilities for land, facilities, and visitors. For many Massachusetts residents, sanctuary offerings such as school programs or field trips, day camps, birding programs, or service learning projects form their first connection with us.

Visitation is growing, and the changing demographics of Massachusetts provide new opportunities. Mass Audubon sanctuaries offer outdoor respite for all, and we are committed to creating a more welcoming environment that is relevant, inclusive, and accessible for all visitors.

ACTIONS:

- 1.1** Further strengthen and focus sanctuaries and programs to better serve a broad range of constituents.
- 1.2** Expand public visibility and build community.
- 1.3** Enhance visitor services and visitor education.
- 1.4** Create an ever-more-welcoming presence for ever-more-diverse visitors.



Demand for “service learning” opportunities is increasing.



Schools remain interested in programs and field trips, even as their budgets are cut.



Many visitors are seeking opportunities to escape the noise and clutter of their daily lives.



Our wildlife sanctuaries help energize and engage individuals and communities.

Goal 1 Representative Strategic Benchmarks:

- Increase the number of programs for underserved populations in urban communities.
- Welcome people of all abilities to our nature centers by meeting or exceeding state/federal accessibility guidelines by 2015.
- Enhance the visitor experience by installing informal play spaces and providing facilities such as picnic areas that make a visit more inviting and accessible to all audiences.
- Recruit Mass Audubon members from every city and town in the Commonwealth.



STRATEGIC GOAL 2:

PROTECT AND STEWARD MASSACHUSETTS HABITATS



Lower Spectacle Pond

The Challenge

While Massachusetts has successfully preserved many important lands and habitats, we continue to lose unprotected open space at an alarming rate. In some ecologically significant parts of the state, the very last acre of natural land is threatened by development; in others, key wildlife corridors and connections are being lost.

The state has lost significant wildlife habitat, such as Atlantic white cedar swamps, vernal pools, salt marshes, coastal heathlands, free-flowing streams and rivers, and freshwater marshes. Fields and woodlands, wetland forest edges, and dunes have been cleared, filled, and transformed from wildlife habitat to human use and occupation. Habitat loss and habitat fragmentation are particularly critical problems in the eastern two-thirds of the state.

Mobilize Mass Audubon's science and land protection resources and, with our members and partners, work to preserve the state's diminishing natural heritage.

Protecting habitat is the most important strategy we can employ to slow the loss of biodiversity in the Commonwealth. Mass Audubon has identified, acquired, and protected wildlife habitat for over 70 years, with 34,000 acres of ecologically significant land now under our care. The lands that we protect—in 90 Massachusetts communities—provide places not only to protect wildlife, but also to educate people and offer relaxation and inspiration for our visitors. These sanctuaries shelter 175 of Massachusetts' 430 endangered species and protect 20 of the approximately 30 endangered or threatened habitats.

We are looked to as a statewide leader in ecological management and land stewardship, and we model and share best practices with private landowners and other conservation organizations. Mass Audubon scientists conduct research and monitoring projects on the restoration and management of salt marshes, grassland bird habitat, and coastal heathland communities; on controlling non-native invasive species; and on coastal waterbirds, assisted by thousands of trained volunteers. Our history compels us to remain particularly focused on birds and bird habitats, which we have done with passion and success for over a century.

ACTIONS:

- 2.1 Strengthen land protection and stewardship strategies that protect the ecological resources of our sanctuaries.
- 2.2 Work collaboratively to permanently protect a diversity of habitats sufficient to sustain the ecological integrity of our landscape in response to climate change and other ecosystem stresses.
- 2.3 Deepen our knowledge and understanding of the Commonwealth's biological heritage as we determine the response of species to climate change and other stressors.
- 2.4 Understand, evaluate, and protect birds and their habitats through applied bird conservation programs and by engaging the public in bird conservation activities.



Our work models effective ecological management and land stewardship practices.



Over 40,000 acres of land in Massachusetts were converted to residential development from 1999-2005.



Long-term monitoring of species in Massachusetts will be critical to understanding future changes.



Species' ranges are changing rapidly in response to climate change.

Goal 2 Representative Strategic Benchmarks:

- Implement the Community Preservation Act in half of the communities in the Commonwealth, including five small cities.
- Protect an additional 2,500 acres of Mass Audubon-owned priority lands, and open our 100th sanctuary to the public.
- Establish within the state budget a "1% for Nature" benchmark.
- Complete a report on the "State of the Commonwealth's Birds" to identify highest priority bird conservation actions.



STRATEGIC GOAL 3:

RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE



Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

The Challenge

Widely accepted climate models predict that Massachusetts will warm substantially and that there will be an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events, greater carbon dioxide concentrations, and a rise in sea level. Many models predict intensified summer drought and changes in the timing of river and stream flow despite an increase in annual precipitation.

Mass Audubon recognizes that the disruptive effects of rapid climate warming are a major threat to people and wildlife in the Commonwealth and on the planet. Current expectations for climate change create challenges for our economy, security, and health.

Learn to live sustainably and protect nature through energy conservation, public outreach, policy initiatives, and scientific research.

Mass Audubon offers significant and unique contributions to the climate change debate: we manage many facilities that are similar in scale to small commercial or residential use, so we can “teach by example” by demonstrating renewable energy use and energy conservation methods. We have the opportunity to motivate 100,000 members, representing a tremendous force for change. Our 34,000 acres of land represent a “living laboratory” for monitoring and adapting to the impacts of climate change. We bring scientific credibility to the assessment of the impacts of renewable energy facilities on wildlife, especially birds, and bring scientific and policy expertise to the environmentally sensitive development of renewable power, particularly wind power, at state and national levels.

ACTIONS:

- 3.1 Reduce Mass Audubon's energy consumption and use these activities as demonstration models for our members and the general public.
- 3.2 Educate our members about their ecological footprint and assist them in obtaining the knowledge and tools to live "lighter on the land."
- 3.3 Advocate for state and national public policy initiatives regarding climate change and assess proposals for renewable energy development in Massachusetts that establish significant policy precedents.
- 3.4 Inform the public, especially policy decision makers, funders, and the media, regarding Mass Audubon's climate change strategy and role.



We will work to bring our facilities to net-zero emissions.



Local food, community-supported agriculture, community gardens, and organic farming help connect people to the land.



By 2100, projections indicate increases in the sea level of 20 inches and temperature of 6 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit in New England.

Goal 3 Representative Strategic Benchmarks:

- Reduce Mass Audubon's carbon footprint by 50 percent by 2014 (baseline year: 2003).
- Partner with organizations and companies to provide tools, incentives, and models to reduce our members' carbon footprints by 25% by 2020.
- Integrate and expand climate change and sustainability themes into public, camp, and school programs.
- Develop environmentally protective siting and operating standards for offshore and land-based wind power for Massachusetts, and support the development of near- and offshore wind energy capacity in Massachusetts.



STRATEGIC GOAL 4:

BUILD CAPACITY

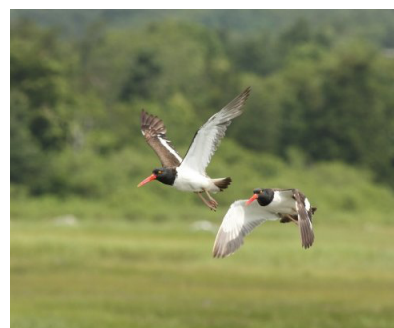


Stony Brook Wildlife Sanctuary

Build the capacity of our organization so that we can continue to lead by example as one of the top conservation organizations in the United States.

Mass Audubon has room to grow! Nature lovers, outdoor enthusiasts, families looking to spend outdoor time with children, stewards who want to care for the environment, and activists who want to influence environmental policies are all potential supporters. Free admission and invitations to special events at local sanctuaries are the two most important benefits to attract members, and protecting land, wildlife, and habitat are the themes that resonate most with our potential market.

Volunteers are critical to Mass Audubon's success. Interest in volunteering is up and will continue to grow, fueled by the increasing number of retirees, college graduates seeking permanent employment, corporate and school volunteers, and others interested in service learning and community service. Mass Audubon volunteers love their work and learn useful skills. Twenty-five percent of them indicate that they plan to increase their volunteer hours in the next three years. The growing interest in "greening" our homes and lifestyles creates a greater demand for volunteers who have an awareness of climate, energy, land use, and sustainability.



ACTIONS:

- 4.1 Strengthen and raise awareness of Mass Audubon to attract more people to our mission and increase membership, thus leveraging our impact.
- 4.2 Build on the strong foundation of existing volunteer recruitment, training, and recognition efforts to make our volunteer programs responsive to changing needs and opportunities.
- 4.3 Become the employer of choice for people working in environmental organizations in New England, with special emphasis on recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.
- 4.4 Enhance and support fundraising to successfully fulfill our mission.
- 4.5 Use technological resources to the greatest advantage by using new media to expand our reach and impact in innovative ways.



Inspiring action is a key element of Mass Audubon's work.



The people of Massachusetts believe in protecting land, wildlife, and habitat.



Protecting the nature of Massachusetts is our mission, and we want more residents of the Commonwealth to join us.

Goal 4 Representative Strategic Benchmarks:

- Complete a brand awareness initiative to increase visitation, membership, and program participation.
- Increase the number and time commitment of volunteers, and increase their diversity with regard to age, gender, and ethnicity.
- Have staff, Board of Directors, and Mass Audubon Council members increasingly reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth.
- Provide an array of opportunities for service learning for youth and adults, and make Mass Audubon's sanctuaries recognized centers for conservation-oriented learning and citizen science volunteers.







Fall Above Pepperell Dam

Inspire. — Preserve. — Enjoy.

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