



PENNSYLVANIA AUDUBON COUNCIL

CONSERVATION ISSUES OF CONCERN:

An Outline and Short Description of the Conservation Issues Identified by Chapter Representatives at the June Council Meeting

I. BIRD FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES:

Focus on education and advocacy to promote actions to make communities safer for birds. This includes efforts to:

1. Promote and support bird friendly rules, regulations and legislation.
 - a. Federal Level -- promote and support the Bird Safe Building Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Endangered Species Act, etc.
 - b. Pennsylvania -- promote proposals for state legislation and regulations for bird safe windows and buildings as modeled by several other states.
 - c. Municipal/Local Level -- strengthen building codes and promote local ordinances that include bird safe window treatments.
2. Educate individual property owners of buildings that are four stories or less to take action to mitigate bird collisions with glass to reduce mortality.
3. Support a "Bird Safe Pennsylvania" campaign to have more municipalities replicate the models provided by "Bird Safe Philly," "Bird Safe Pittsburgh," and "Bird Safe Harrisburg." This includes "Lights Out" initiatives.

II. ENHANCE AND PROTECT BIRD HABITAT:

The loss of habitat is recognized as a major factor in the precipitous decline of birds. Measures that protect existing habitat and programs that foster habitat restoration are needed.

1. Restore the Important Bird Areas programs and foster the protection and management of these sites for the benefit of birds and other wildlife.
2. Support measures that protect the Allegheny National Forest and our state parks, state game lands, natural heritage sites, etc.
 - a. Support proposals to restore habitat and encourage proposals that do not result in the fragmentation/degradation of habitat.
 - b. Monitor proposals that seek to promote activities that have a harmful impact on these special places. This includes threats such as permitting ATV use in important habitats.
 - c. Support measures that control populations of white-tailed deer to mitigate their adverse impact on our forests.
3. Promote and advocate for programs that encourage property owners to manage properties for the benefit of birds and other wildlife.
 - a. Broadly support education of property owners around the benefits of native plants.
 - b. Support programs that recognize properties as bird and wildlife friendly.
 - c. Support programs that address the control and mitigation of nonnative and invasive plants.
4. Expand the role of chapters with the Bird Town program, and involve more communities and municipalities across the Commonwealth in this program.
5. Promote the expansion of Environmental Advisory Councils across the state.
6. Support local ordinances to permit conversion of lawns to native wildflower meadows while educating local officials about the benefits of such programs.
7. Support building codes and ordinances that require landscaping with native plants.
8. Support funding for creating wildlife corridors and riparian buffers.
9. Support legislation and policies that limit urban and suburban sprawl.

III. ENERGY DEVELOPMENT:

Address the challenges of climate change with action at the local, state and federal levels as well as personal and community actions to reduce the use of fossil fuels which increase greenhouse gases.

1. Educate and advocate for rules, regulations, ordinances and laws that are aimed to address climate change.
2. Promote and support programs, rules, regulations and legislation to promote properly sited renewable energy such as solar and wind, with an emphasis on providing renewable energy to underserved communities.
3. Monitor and discourage the construction of transmission lines, pipelines, and related components of energy distribution that fragment forest habitat.
4. Discourage the expansion of fracking.
5. Support efforts to clean up abandoned coal mines, remediate coal mining waste and cap gas wells.
6. Promote the conservation of forests and woodlots and encourage tree planting and reforestation programs for carbon capture.

IV. ADDRESS POLLUTION THREATS TO BIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS

Pollution continues as a major threat to the quality of the environment, thus affecting the health of birds, wildlife and people. Measures to reduce and control pollution are needed more than ever.

1. Address the multiple threats posed by plastics in the environment by supporting measures to eliminate single use plastic bags and containers.
2. Support measures that reduce the use of rodenticides, pesticides and herbicides in the environment and take greater strides to integrated pest management that eliminates poisons, sticky tape to control spotted lanternflies, etc.
3. Support legislation to eliminate lead ammunition and plastic shotgun shells while educating hunters about the benefits of such measures.
4. Support initiatives to protect the watersheds across the Commonwealth, such as infrastructure funding to address stormwater runoff and inadequate sewage treatment systems.

V. OTHER ISSUES

1. Require Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policies in all advocacy efforts.
2. Address the issue of outdoor and feral cats.
3. Strengthen Environmental Education Standards and promote environmental education in our schools and communities.
4. Be a voice for adequate and increased funding for environmental agencies at the federal, state and regional levels; and promote DEP independence from the PA legislature.
5. Support wildlife rehab centers.
6. Coordinate efforts with other local and state environmental advocacy groups.
7. Support noncoercive measures to control the growth rate of the human population.