

Protect Birds Across the State and Beyond  
Join the Audubon Society of Portland

When you join the Audubon Society of Portland, you are adding your voice to one of the oldest and most effective bird conservation organizations in the country. Our current priorities to protect birds across our region and our state include the following:

- **Protecting nature close to home:** Portland Audubon is working to ensure that every resident in the Portland Metropolitan area has a natural area within a 1/4 mile of their home.
- **Protecting Important Bird Areas statewide:** Portland Audubon and a team of bird experts have identified 104 areas across the State of Oregon that are critical for bird migration and nesting. We are working to ensure all of these "IBAs" are adequately protected and managed to promote bird conservation.
- **Promoting a system of Marine Protected Areas:** Many of our most imperiled species are found along the Oregon Coast. Audubon is working to ensure that the State establishes permanent protections for our fragile marine environment.
- **Recovering endangered bird species:** Portland Audubon is working to protect and recover our most imperiled species and the ecosystems on which they depend including the Northern Spotted Owl, Marbled Murrelet, Snowy Plover and Sage Grouse.
- **Increasing penalties at both the State and Federal levels for illegal killing of birds:** Portland Audubon continues to work to strengthen bird protections laws and insure their strict enforcement.



Audubon Society of Portland

Wildlife Care Center

5151 NW Cornell Road

Portland, OR 97210

Phone: 503-292-0304

9 a.m.-5 p.m. - 7 days a week 365 days a year



Administration Offices

Phone: 503-292-6855

Fax: 503-292-1021

Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon-Fri

Nature Store

Phone: 503-292-9493

Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Mon-Sat

10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sun

Sanctuaries

Every day, dawn to dusk

Rare Bird Alert

Phone: 503-292-6855

www.audubonportland.org



Living with Urban Wildlife



Photo: Jim Cruce

Nearly 500 species of birds use Oregon for some part of their lifecycle ranking Oregon the fifth highest in bird diversity among all North American states and provinces. More than 200 of these species pass through the Portland Metro area each year. The presence of these creatures helps preserve the health of our environment, supports our economy and enriches our lives.

Today, however, many bird species in our state and across our nation are in trouble. National Audubon Society has identified 54 (11%) of the bird species found in Oregon as either "globally threatened" or "at risk of becoming globally threatened." (*National Audubon Society Watch List*, November 2006). In addition, long-term monitoring data shows many of the bird species still considered "common" in our state have seen significant declines over the past 40 years. Common Oregon bird species with greater than 50% population declines during the past 40 years include Barn Swallows, American Goldfinches, Rufous Hummingbirds, House Wrens, Orange-crowned Warblers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Killdeer, Mourning Doves, Olive-sided Flycatchers and even our official state bird, the Western Meadowlark. (*National Audubon Common Birds in Decline Report*, June 2007). While these species are not yet in danger of extinction, we cannot afford to allow these negative trends to continue.

There are many causes for these declines. They include loss of habitat, introduction of invasive plant and animal species, toxic contaminants in our environment, and a variety of man-made hazards. Reversing these declines will require improving habitat and reducing hazards throughout their migratory range. Our urban parks and natural areas, stream corridors, neighborhoods and backyards all have an important role in helping to protect and preserve these feathered friends.

For the Birds

Protecting Birds in Your  
Backyard and Beyond



# Protecting Birds Begins in Your Backyard



When Lewis and Clark passed by the Willamette River in November, 1805, they complained that the sky was so thick with birds they were unable to sleep at night. The Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Region lies in the middle of a bird superhighway known as the Pacific Flyway. Millions of birds pass through our region each year on their north and south migrations. For many species our region also provides critical nesting and wintering habitat. The Rufous Hummingbird passing through your backyard may very well be on a journey of several thousand miles from its wintering ground in Central Mexico to its nesting ground in Southern Alaska. Her survival may very well depend on whether she can find a safe place to rest and

feed in your neighborhood. With a little extra effort, you may even be able to create a place for her to stop and nest!

**The following checklist will allow you to create a “bird friendly” backyard. It is important to consider each of the different elements together. Creating bird habitat but ignoring hazards such as cats and pesticides can create a situation that does more harm than good. Audubon’s Urban Wildlife Resource Office is available 365 days a year to help you with your backyard wildlife quesitons. Call us at 503-292-0304 or visit us on the web at [www.audubonportland.org](http://www.audubonportland.org).**

## How You Can Help Birds in Your Backyard:

- **Remove Invasive Plant Species:** Many invasive, non-native plant species destroy native habitat and with it, plants on which our birds depend for survival. While there are many species of concern, five of the most common and problematic are English Ivy, Himalayan Blackberry, Garlic Mustard, Japanese Knotweed and Clematis. For information on identification and removal of invasive plant species, check out East Multnomah County Soil and Water Conservation District’s excellent website: [www.naturescape.org](http://www.naturescape.org).
- **Naturescape Your Yard:** Plant a combination of native plants and trees to provide birds with cover, food and nesting opportunities. Group several of the same species together with the largest species towards the edge of the yard to create a songbird border. Include evergreens for cover, thorny species to create nesting opportunities and berry producing shrubs such as snowberry, salmonberry, red flowering currant and huckleberry to provide food.
- **Create a Brush Pile:** Pile up downed tree limbs to create a brush pile, a great source of cover for birds during bad weather.

Photo: Jim Cruce



Photo: Jim Cruce



- **Provide a Source of Water:** Birds need water to survive. Providing a source of clean water for drinking and bathing is a surefire way to increase the number and diversity of birds in your yard. A flat bottomed, shallow bowl with 1/2-1 inch of water in it will work best. Water should be changed every other day.

- **Install Bird Nest Boxes:** Nest boxes can provide birds with important nesting opportunities. Audubon Society of Portland’s Nature Store provides a variety of different types of bird nest boxes and expert advice on which species are likely to be found in your neighborhood.

- **Feed Bird Responsibly:** The best way to help birds is to provide them with natural habitat and food sources. However, bird feeders can add additional nutrition to their diets and provide you with better opportunities to view the birds in your yard. Always feed natural, fresh seeds, feed small amounts daily and clean feeders once a week with a 10% bleach solution. If you see sick birds at your feeders, stop feeding for at least three weeks and allow birds to disperse. The Audubon Nature Store can provide you with bird feeding supplies, feeders and expert advice.

- **Reduce Pesticides and Fertilizers:** Pesticides and fertilizers pollute our streams, poison our wildlife and destroy beneficial insects on which many birds depend for survival. Planting with native plants that thrive in our environment and reducing lawn area can help reduce weed problems. For more information on natural gardening, visit Metro’s website at: [www.metro-region.org/index.cfm/go/by.web/id+565](http://www.metro-region.org/index.cfm/go/by.web/id+565).

- **Keep Cats Indoors:** Free-roaming outdoor cats present one of the greatest hazards for backyard birds. Cat predation accounts for nearly 40% of the injured and orphaned animals brought to Audubon’s Wildlife Care Center each year. Studies show that even well-fed cats kill birds. Please, wherever possible, house cats indoors or in secure outdoor enclosures. It will keep your cats safer too!

- **Reduce Window Strikes:** Scientists estimate that window strikes may be second only to habitat loss in accounting for bird deaths each year. Window strikes can be reduced by hanging bird feeders either within 3 feet of windows or at least 20 feet away from windows. If windows are frequently struck by birds, try hanging mylar tape strips from the top of the window. The flashing tape will often alert birds to the hazard ahead.

- **Report the Birds that you see to eBird or Project Feeder Watch:** Keep track of the birds in your neighborhood and then add your observations to one of these online bird databases. When you add your observations to eBird or Project Feeder Watch, you help bird scientists across the country. eBird gives you a special password that allows you to access a permanent record of the birds you have seen. Project Feeder Watch provides a starter kit to help you identify your birds. Go to: [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org) or [www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/).

- **Report Anybody Illegally Harming Birds:** Native birds have been protected under federal law for nearly a century. However, illegal killing of protected bird species remains a serious problem in our region. Audubon Society of Portland’s Migratory Bird Protection Fund offers rewards of up to \$1,500 to people reporting illegal killing of protected bird species. If you believe a bird has been illegally harmed, call Audubon Society of Portland at 503-292-0304.

Photo: Jim Cruce

