



2017 Legislative Priorities

Since our founding in 1902, Audubon has worked to ensure that birds can survive and thrive in North Carolina. While the threats have changed, the passion and impact of Audubon's members never wavers. Today, over 25,000 politically diverse Audubon members across the state help to ensure the continued protection of our birds and the growth of North Carolina's \$1 billion birding and wildlife viewing economy. Audubon's 2017 legislative priorities include:

Habitat Protection & Land Conservation

North Carolina is home to hundreds of bird species that count on our forests, our coasts and our mountains, including 4.9 million acres classified as Audubon Important Bird Areas, or IBAs. These important natural areas are critical to keeping our bird populations resilient in the face of development pressure and changes in our climate – and attract millions of dollars in tourism from visitors who come to North Carolina for bird viewing. Over the past 20 years, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund alone has helped protect over 177 sites within Audubon IBAs and leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars in additional private and federal dollars.

- **Support the following items in the legislature's biennium budget:**
 - \$28 million in recurring funding for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF)
 - \$28 million in recurring funding for the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
 - \$7.5 million in recurring funding for the Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund
 - \$600,000 in recurring funds to the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation to protect riparian buffers (\$350k to Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and \$250k to Community Conservation Assistance Program Program)
 - \$100,000 to the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation to study strategies to overcome barriers to landowner participation in forest management planning (85% of forest owners have no forest management plan, which precludes conservation and wildlife planning)
- **Support** HB 353 (Dobson, Brisson, Brenden Jones, Hunter) – adds Warwick Mill Bay, a rare Carolina Bay with one of the state's largest inland heronries, as a Natural Area to the State Park System.

Protect rare coastal bird habitat threatened by terminal groins

Large stretches of mud flats and sand spits at natural inlets on North Carolina's coast represent the most important habitat for Piping Plovers, Red Knots, and other imperiled shorebirds. Unfortunately, 80% of North Carolina's natural inlets have been altered by bulkheads, terminal groins or other modification. The few remaining natural inlets constitute some of the last remaining places that can support these birds. Without them, we will lose the rich natural, cultural and economic history associated with these birds.

In 2011, the legislature passed Senate Bill 110, which repealed a 30-year ban on hardened structures and allowed up to four "test" terminal groins to be built on inlets in North Carolina. Lawmakers have since permitted an additional two "test" terminal groins.

- **Oppose** any additional increase in the number of "test" terminal groins and keep in place the 2011 compromise agreement ban on use of taxpayer dollars to fund terminal groins

Expand clean energy, including responsible wind and solar

Extreme weather and changes to the timing of seasons are already impacting nesting success, migration patterns and the range of our birds. In fact, 60% of North American birds have shifted their winter ranges northward over the past 40 years. In North Carolina, 170 of our most cherished birds – including the Brown Pelican, Wild Turkey, Osprey, and Brown-headed Nuthatch – are threatened. North Carolina must do its part to reduce carbon pollution and transition to clean energy. Audubon supports state clean energy policies and wind and solar projects that are properly designed, sited and monitored to ensure compatibility with birds and other wildlife.

- **Support** wind and clean energy bills that properly balance economic/military/wildlife interests
- **Oppose** HB 465 (Bell, Dixon, Cleveland) & S331 (Brown, Sanderson, Pate) – places 3-year moratorium on new wind projects
- **Oppose** HB 470 (Millis) & S366 (Cook, Sanderson, Brock) – adds new regulations and unnecessary red tape for wind developers
- **Oppose** HB 264 (Dixon, Bell, Collins, Adams) – increases property tax on solar farm
- **Oppose** HB 267 (Dixon, Bell) – reduces Renewable Portfolio Standard from 12.5% to 8%