



BROWN PELICAN. PHOTO: FRANKLIN ABBOTT/AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

What's good for birds is good for people.

For 120 years, Audubon has worked to protect birds and the places they need. We are committed to advancing science-based, bipartisan solutions that address biodiversity loss and climate change—because what benefits birds also benefits people and the planet.

Audubon has 1.9 million supporters across the United States, and our work directly impacts communities nationwide. We advocate for federal funding for key agencies and programs that Americans rely on and that provide significant economic returns. Birdwatching alone supports over 1.4 million domestic jobs and contributes \$108 billion annually to the U.S. economy (FWS 2024). These investments are essential not only for securing a healthier future for birds but also for sustaining the economic vitality of communities across the country.

We present the following appropriations requests to advance impactful habitat conservation and climate solutions and urge Congress to uphold strong foundational laws that protect birds and their habitats.

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ENERGY & WATER

APPROPRIATIONS FY26

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Cooperative Watershed Management

\$20 million

The Cooperative Watershed Management program, through the Bureau of Reclamation, enables diverse water interests to collaborate on developing regional solutions for the arid West. Funding supports communities in forming watershed groups to develop and implement projects that address local water needs. These projects not only improve water availability and quality but also sustain local economies by supporting agriculture, outdoor recreation, and tourism—sectors that depend on healthy watersheds. Additional funding is required to identify, plan, and design new projects that enhance both environmental and economic resilience in these communities.

WaterSMART

\$65 million

The Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART program supports cost-shared funding for projects to conserve and use water more efficiently, implement nature-based solutions and ecosystem restoration for birds and other wildlife, plan and design on-the-ground activities, and advance drought planning, among other efforts. By securing water supplies, WaterSMART helps sustain agriculture, a cornerstone of many rural communities, while also supporting industries such as outdoor recreation and tourism that rely on healthy waterways. Reliable water access attracts businesses, boosts property values, and fosters job growth in multiple sectors. Since WaterSMART offers multiple programs for a wide range of projects, sustained funding is important to ensure each category can continue to provide unique benefits.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Advanced Research Projects Agency

\$460 million

The Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy (ARPA-E) supports research aimed at rapidly developing energy technologies whose development and commercialization are too risky to attract private sector investment but could significantly change the energy sector in a manner that addresses environmental, energy security, or economic challenges. Innovation is critical to meeting our energy needs, and ARPA-E helps develop long-term solutions that not only lower the cost of energy for consumers, increase U.S. competitiveness in the energy sector, and improve national security, but also reduce impacts from energy production on birds, wildlife habitat, and communities.

ENERGY & WATER CONT.

APPROPRIATIONS FY26

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY CONT.

Grid Deployment Office

\$60 million

The Department of Energy's Grid Deployment Office (GDO) focuses on the development of new and upgraded high-capacity electric transmission lines nationwide and improving the resiliency of our power grid. Continued investment in facilitating responsibly sited transmission through the Grid Deployment Office will bolster our economy, help all forms of energy connect to the grid and advance American energy dominance all while mitigating harm to birds. This includes continued support of the National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor program administered by GDO. A 2023 study from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation found that an additional 35 GW of transmission capacity between grid regions will be necessary for maintaining a reliable grid in the face of extreme weather events and growing demand from electrification, advanced manufacturing, and data centers, reinforcing the critical role of the Grid Deployment Office to support responsible deployment of transmission infrastructure that reflects the needs of birds and communities.

Solar Energy Technologies Office

\$318 million

Situated within the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), the Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) supports research and development to harness America's abundant solar energy for secure, affordable, and reliable solar energy. Today, solar energy ranks as one of the cheapest forms of energy available to the grid, yet it constitutes less than 6% of the total electricity generated domestically. The work of SETO includes technology development, testing and verification of technologies that help solar energy projects avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on wildlife, birds, and ecosystems, including through improved scientific research into the avian interactions with solar technologies. These funds are critical to maintaining and growing America's energy dominance and reducing the costs of electricity bills for consumers.

Wind Energy Technologies Office

\$137 million

Also within the EERE, the Wind Energy Technologies Office (WETO) supports research and development to harness America's abundant wind energy for secure, affordable, and reliable wind energy. Land-based wind energy generation has increased over 60-fold since 2000, but still accounts for less than 11% of electricity generated in the U.S. Likewise, while the total available offshore wind capacity is more than triple the electricity generated nationwide in 2023, the U.S. currently harnesses less than 0.0005% of that capacity.

The work of WETO includes technology development, testing and verification of technologies that help wind energy projects avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on wildlife, birds, and ecosystems, including through improved scientific research into the avian interactions with wind technologies – both onshore and offshore. These funds are critical to maintaining and growing America's energy dominance and reducing the costs of electricity bills for consumers.

ENERGY & WATER CONT.

APPROPRIATIONS
FY26

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Engineering with Nature

\$40 million

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Engineering with Nature (EWN) initiative integrates natural and nature-based features into infrastructure projects to enhance resilience, protect communities from extreme weather events, and restore ecosystems. By leveraging natural systems—such as wetlands, dunes, and shorelines—EWN provides cost-effective solutions that reduce flood risks, improve water quality, protect local economies and create critical habitat for birds and other wildlife. Increased investment in this program will expand its capacity to support nature-based projects nationwide, delivering environmental, economic, and community benefits.

Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program

\$73 million

The Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) is a dual-purpose program to improve navigation efficiency and reliability and ecological health and resiliency of the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS). The program combines navigation and ecosystem goals for the river system by modernizing river management and operations and implementing projects that have multiple sustainable benefits for water quality, wildlife, and flood mitigation. The UMRS is crucial to the nation's economy, and investments in the multiple functions of the river through NESP will provide long-term benefits and future cost-savings. This program funds both ecosystems and navigation projects and we want this amount for the ecosystem projects.

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration

\$725 million

The restoration of the Everglades is a partnership between state and federal agencies and our request specifically pertains to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' contribution to this project. This initiative is crucial for providing clean drinking water to the nine million Floridians who rely on this watershed. By restoring natural water flow, reducing harmful algal blooms, and improving water quality, the project ensures long-term water security. Additionally, it enhances climate resilience by mitigating flood risks and preventing saltwater intrusion. Beyond its environmental benefits, Everglades restoration offers a 4:1 return on investment, generating billions in economic activity through job creation, tourism, recreation, and fisheries.

Upper Mississippi River Restoration

\$100 million (**\$25 million** for long-term resource monitoring **\$75 million** for habitat rehabilitation and enhancement)

Through habitat restoration and long-term monitoring, Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) supports a healthy river system and provides significant benefits to people, wildlife, and the economy. UMRR projects have protected water quality for 20 million people that rely on the river for drinking water, improved habitat for 350 species of birds that travel the Mississippi River Flyway, reduced flooding impacts on river communities, and has added to the nearly \$600 billion that the river contributes to the nation's economy. The ecological improvements yield significant economic and public health benefits all the way downstream to the Gulf.

INTERIOR & ENVIRONMENT

APPROPRIATIONS FY26

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Wildlife Habitat Management

\$200 million

As the largest land management agency in the country, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has a critical role in managing resilient natural resources and healthy wildlife populations for hunting, birdwatching and recreation. Sustained funding for BLM's Wildlife Habitat Account is critical to support activities including greater sage-grouse conservation, nature-based land management, and the National Seed Strategy, which supports native seed production for landscape restoration. These efforts not only protect ecosystems but also generate significant economic benefits by supporting outdoor recreation, tourism, and land restoration industries, which provide jobs in rural communities and contribute to local economies across the country.

Renewable Energy Management Program

\$53 million

The Bureau of Land Management maintains vast public lands with immense renewable energy potential. Increased funding is needed to sustain progress in permitting renewable projects and addressing increasing demand. Timely processing of applications and oversight is vital, requiring adequate staffing and funding for Renewable Energy Coordinating Offices. Meeting this funding request will expedite renewable energy deployment and alleviate permitting obstacles.



NORTHERN CARDINAL. PHOTO: CAROLE WILEY /
AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS



MOURNING DOVE. PHOTO: MICHELE BLACK /
GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

INTERIOR & ENVIRONMENT CONT.

APPROPRIATIONS
FY26

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

\$211 million

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) facilitates the responsible development of energy resources in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) of the United States. As a part of this work, BOEM is legally required to conduct environmental science and analysis that helps quantify and better understand the impacts of energy production and mining on marine ecosystems, habitats, and wildlife, including seabirds, including wind energy. BOEM's work is essential to responsibly harness energy off America's coast while working to avoid, minimize, offset, and monitor impacts on wildlife.

BUREAU OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT

\$205 million

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) is responsible for ensuring that energy infrastructure and mining activities that occur in the OCS of the United States occur within the guidelines of applicable environmental and occupational safety laws and regulations through monitoring and enforcement activities. In addition, BSEE oversees the decommissioning of energy and mining infrastructure in the OCS at the end of their productive life. BSEE's work is critically important to ensuring energy activities in the OCS do not disproportionately impact wildlife, habitat, or ecosystems, while also helping to produce the monitoring needed to better quantify the actual impacts of infrastructure on marine species.



GREAT BLUE HERON. PHOTO: JEFF KEMPE /
AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS



RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD. PHOTO: DOUGG GERMAN /
AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

INTERIOR & ENVIRONMENT CONT.

APPROPRIATIONS
FY26

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Clean Water State Revolving Fund

\$1.7 billion

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program is a federal-state partnership that provides low-interest loans to communities for a wide range of water infrastructure projects, including municipal wastewater facilities, nonpoint source pollution control, and stormwater runoff mitigation. Created in 1987, the program provides states the flexibility to fund a range of projects that address their highest priority water quality needs on a rolling basis as repayment of loans “revolves” back into state programs to allow for financing of new projects. The CWSRF has provided countless communities across the country with the ability to make crucial water infrastructure upgrades and resolve local water quality concerns which in turns increases local property values and attracts business development.

Nonpoint Source Management Program

\$200 million

Nonpoint source pollution, such as urban and rural stormwater runoff, is the dominant source of water quality degradation in the nation. NPS pollution impacts drinking water supplies, recreation opportunities, and wildlife. Established in 1987, the NPS program supports local planning and implementation of practices that mitigate and prevent pollution from entering waterways. Practices include streambank stabilization, stormwater retention structures, and streamside buffers. The practices can also help prevent flood damages to homes, farms, and businesses.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geographic Programs

\$690 million

Including \$475 million for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

The Department of the Interior’s Geographic Programs provide targeted conservation efforts for critical ecosystems, such as the Everglades, Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Columbia River Basin. These programs address region-specific environmental challenges, including habitat loss, water pollution, and invasive species, ensuring the long-term health of these landscapes. Increased funding will enable expanded restoration efforts, strengthen partnerships with state and local governments, and protect key habitats that support migratory birds and other wildlife.

The Great Lakes, which provide drinking water for over 42 million people and support a \$7 billion fishing industry and a vast tourism industry, are being improved by restoration efforts. For every dollar spent on Great Lakes Restoration Initiatives – such as cleaning up toxic hot spots, controlling invasive species, restoring wildlife habitat, protecting wetlands, and reducing harmful algae – communities reap economic benefits of more than 3 to 1. More than 6,000 projects are either underway or completed throughout the region, benefiting community health and creating jobs.

INTERIOR & ENVIRONMENT CONT.

APPROPRIATIONS
FY26

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Delaware River Basin Restoration Program

\$17 million

The Delaware River Watershed, covering 12,800 square miles, generates \$25 billion in annual economic activity, supports 600,000 jobs, and contributes \$21 billion worth of ecosystem goods and services each year. It provides drinking water for 13.3 million Americans—more than four percent of the U.S. population. The watershed, home to the longest undammed river east of the Mississippi, also serves as a critical refuge for over 90 species of fish and 400 types of birds, including more than 250 species of migratory birds.

Coastal Program

\$13.5 million

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program is a critical partnership-driven initiative that supports habitat conservation along the nation's coasts, benefiting both wildlife and communities. By providing technical and financial assistance for projects that restore wetlands, protect shorelines, and enhance coastal resilience, this program plays a vital role in safeguarding habitats for migratory birds, fish, and other wildlife. These restoration efforts also drive local economies by supporting commercial and recreational fisheries, boosting tourism, and creating jobs in coastal restoration, infrastructure improvement, and ecotourism industries. Increased funding will allow the program to expand its efforts, support more conservation partnerships, and strengthen coastal ecosystems that provide essential protection against rising sea levels and extreme weather events.

The Migratory Bird Program

\$94 million

The Migratory Bird Program provides critical leadership on migratory bird conservation by implementing bedrock laws and grant programs, coordinating with partners, providing technical assistance, issuing permits, and more. In the past 10 years, staff capacity for the program has declined by 20%, and program funding has declined by 10%, when accounting for inflation. To ensure that essential activities can continue, increased funding is needed, including additional funding for Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, Permits, and Conservation and Monitoring, ensuring that conservation efforts continue to benefit both wildlife and the communities that depend on healthy bird populations for economic activity.



RED-TAILED HAWK. PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER CICCONI /
AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS



RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD. PHOTO: LIDIA MATWSHYN /
AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

INTERIOR & ENVIRONMENT CONT.

APPROPRIATIONS
FY26

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE CONT.

National Wildlife Refuge System

\$725 million

The outdoor recreation boom since 2020 has led to a huge increase in visitation to America's outdoors, including the National Wildlife Refuge System, arguably the nation's most critically conserved lands supporting wildlife. This enthusiasm has not been matched with the increased investment required to maintain these treasured destinations for hunters, anglers, and wildlife watchers. While the investment needed for the National Wildlife Refuge System to fulfill its mission is in excess of \$2 billion, given current fiscal constraints investment of at least \$725 million, equivalent in constant dollars to the 2010 Refuge budget, is warranted and necessary given the extensive needs.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act

\$6.5 million

Each year, over 350 species of birds migrate between the United States, Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean. Regrettably, many of these birds are experiencing significant declines. The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) provides crucial support to protect birds across the Western Hemisphere. By increasing the program's funding to its full authorized amount, additional bird conservation needs can be addressed. Since 2002, the NMBCA has funded over 700 projects that have positively impacted more than 5 million acres of migratory bird habitat.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Program

\$60 million

This conservation initiative, which is both popular and successful, focuses on the protection and restoration of wetlands and associated habitats. The North American Wetlands Conservation Act program has leveraged over \$4 billion, benefiting more than 31 million acres through 3,200 projects throughout North America, contributing to the long-term recovery of numerous waterfowl and other wetland-dependent birds.



BURROWING OWL. PHOTO: LINDSEY DAY /
AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS



PROTHONOTARY WARBLER PHOTO: LINDA STEELE /
AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

INTERIOR & ENVIRONMENT CONT.

APPROPRIATIONS
FY26

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Saline Lakes Integrated Water Availability Assessment

\$5 million

In the arid West, saline lakes and their wetlands constitute an irreplaceable network of habitats that support millions of migrating shorebirds, waterfowl, and other waterbirds throughout their annual cycles. Saline lake ecosystems are confronting serious challenges due to decreased inflows and diversions, drought, and the impacts of a changing climate. The decline of these vital water bodies not only threatens wildlife but also impacts local economies that rely on them for tourism, outdoor recreation, and industries such as hunting and birdwatching, which generate significant revenue for rural communities. Funding is necessary for the U.S. Geological Survey to continue conducting scientific monitoring and assessments that will aid effective management and conservation efforts, including coordination with other agencies, community stakeholders, and nonprofit organizations.

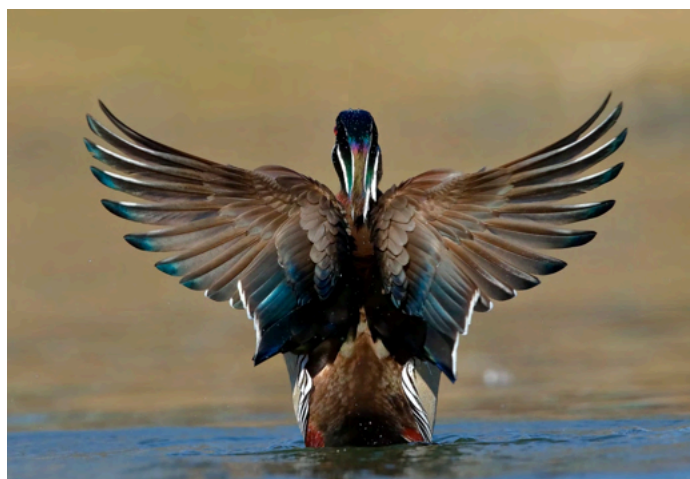
Ecosystems Account at U.S. Geological Survey

\$395 million (**\$77.39 million**
for Species Management Research)

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) manages two critically important programs that improve our understanding of the changes and challenges to bird populations, migratory patterns, and interactions between energy and other infrastructure and bird populations. Since 1920, the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) has served as an integrated scientific program that supports the collection, curation, archiving, and dissemination of data from banded and marked birds. The Bird Breeding Survey (BBS), administered by BBL as a cooperative effort between USGS and Environment Canada, was established in 1966 to monitor the status and trends of North American bird populations. The data provided by BBL and BBS are invaluable to understanding challenges posed to bird populations, and by extension to other wildlife and people. After several years of flat funding, additional investment is necessary to ensure that both programs can continue providing high-quality data, and to support state agencies and research and conservation partners. Funding for each program within the Species Management Research account at USGS should be increased by \$3.6 million.



AMERICAN GOLDFINCH. PHOTO: MURRAY HEAD /
AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS



WOOD DUCK. PHOTO: KENTON GOMEZ /
AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

COMMERCE, JUSTICE & SCIENCE

APPROPRIATIONS
FY26

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Coastal Zone Management Program

\$135 million (**\$53 million** for management and services **\$82 million** for grants)

The Coastal Zone Management Program, authorized under the Coastal Zone Management Act, provides crucial support for state and local coastal management efforts. By funding initiatives such as habitat restoration, erosion control, and sustainable development, the program helps balance conservation with economic growth in coastal communities. With rising threats from climate change and development pressures, additional investments are needed to enhance coastal resilience, protect vital habitats for birds and marine life, and support communities that rely on healthy coastlines.

National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund

\$34 million

The National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund, administered by NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, supports coastal resilience projects that protect communities, restore habitats, and enhance fisheries. Healthy coasts are essential for mitigating the impacts of sea-level rise and extreme weather events, as well as sustaining biodiversity and local economies. Increased investments for this program will ensure more communities can implement nature-based solutions, such as oyster reef restoration and marshland conservation, to safeguard against coastal erosion and storm surges.



RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER. PHOTO: SUSAN ELLISON /
AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS



BARN OWL. PHOTO: SHLOMO NEUMAN /
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STATE-FOREIGN OPERATIONS

APPROPRIATIONS
FY26

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

United States Foundation for International Conservation

\$100 million

The United States Foundation for International Conservation is a groundbreaking public-private initiative designed to address the global biodiversity crisis. The foundation requires a 2:1 private-public match, leveraging private and philanthropic investments to generate up to \$3 billion for conservation over the next decade. These funds will protect critical ecosystems, sustain migratory and non-migratory bird populations, and support local communities through habitat restoration and sustainable economic opportunities. By funding cost-matched projects with strong local engagement, this initiative will strengthen international conservation efforts while advancing U.S. diplomatic and economic interests. Increased federal investment will maximize private-sector contributions, ensure long-term resilience of vulnerable landscapes, and reinforce U.S. leadership in global environmental stewardship.

