

AUDUBON AMERICAS ELEVATING OUR CONSERVATION IMPACT

BUSINESS PLAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JUNE 2021



Tea cultivation and
farming in Chicoral,
Valle del Cauca,
Colombia.

AN INNOVATIVE PLAN TO ELEVATE OUR CONSERVATION IMPACT

Audubon's new strategies are designed to deliver conservation results at an unprecedented scale and pace. By capitalizing on the emerging green economy as well as growing public interest in birds, we intend to mainstream conservation into national and local development agendas while involving a range of NGO partners, business interests, policymakers, and community leaders.

Latin America and the Caribbean host some of the world's most biologically rich landscapes and seascapes. Throughout the region, endangered species and biodiversity are threatened by habitat loss due to deforestation and other environmental degradation. In most countries, conservation efforts have not kept pace with rapid economic growth and intensifying pressure on natural resources. These pressures, combined with the effects of climate change, are expected to increasingly affect water and food security, coastal resilience, economic prosperity, and human health.

Although the National Audubon Society is known for its longstanding commitment to bird conservation, our new goals extend beyond birds to focus on major watersheds and other important areas that birds share with endangered or threatened species and important fisheries. In addition, our strategies are designed to provide broader conservation, economic, and human well-being benefits.

Audubon Americas has developed an ambitious plan to address conservation shortfalls in Latin America and the Caribbean, by applying Audubon's conservation expertise and regional experience in innovative new ways. In the next five years, we are targeting 10 million hectares (25 million acres) of prime ecosystems that are important for priority species and human well-being. By prioritizing ecological connectivity and using birds as ambassadors, our solutions will increase the mobility and range of wildlife in networks of natural areas that will be more resilient to large-scale environmental challenges.

To achieve our conservation goals, we intend to...

Incorporate conservation into national and local development plans. Our approach prioritizes efforts that protect wildlife while promoting sustainable economies, food and water security, climate-change mitigation and adaptation, and human well-being. Via a comprehensive set of initiatives, we intend to mainstream nature-based

solutions into development plans throughout the region, to achieve conservation and sustainable-development impacts at a scale that matters. We will also support national conservation efforts driven by each country's commitments to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Extend our impact through innovative partnerships. Migratory birds connect the nature and people of the Western Hemisphere. Through strategic multi-sector partnerships, we intend to drive change at a country and hemispheric level. By involving more than 100 NGO partners as well as a diverse range of business interests, policymakers, and community leaders, we aim to build a science-based and human-focused conservation effort that is unprecedented in magnitude, scale, and transformational impact.



WHY WE MUST ACT NOW

Audubon's strategy takes aim at the most urgent issues facing species that are at risk of extinction in Latin America and the Caribbean.



CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change exacerbates the threats to people and wildlife. Sea-level rise, coral bleaching, and extreme weather events are impairing habitat and exacerbating declines of marine fish, mammals, and birds. Our coastal resilience strategy will restore and improve the management of millions of hectares of coastal landscapes.



HABITAT LOSS

Habitat loss is rapidly driving severe biodiversity loss. Millions of hectares of terrestrial and coastal habitat are lost or degraded every year due to development or agricultural and coastal practices. Our strategies directly address this threat.



UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Natural resources in Latin America and the Caribbean are under intense pressure from economic and population growth. Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Panama are among the world's most rapidly developing countries. With growth expected to accelerate as economies emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, finding ways to incorporate conservation into food, water, and energy solutions will be critical.

MAINSTREAMING CONSERVATION: AUDUBON'S THEORY OF CHANGE

By incorporating conservation into national development agendas in Latin American and the Caribbean and involving a range of partners—NGOs, business interests, policymakers, and community leaders—our strategies are designed to deliver results at an unprecedented scale and pace.

Audubon's ambitious new plan focuses on the most important habitats that wildlife needs to survive and thrive. Our new goals extend beyond birds to focus on important landscapes and seascapes that support endangered or threatened species and important fisheries. In addition, our strategies are designed to provide broader conservation, economic, and human well-being benefits.

By emphasizing the importance of biodiversity for human health and prosperity, we intend to elevate conservation into national development agendas. This is a critical step, because development plans define major land-use and infrastructure investments (e.g., dams, roads, ports, urban development, and agricultural expansion) and their influence often extends beyond a single governing administration. By incorporating not only NGO partners but also business interests, policymakers, and community leaders from the beginning, we can foster the broad buy-in necessary for sustainable conservation while supporting economic development.

To accomplish this, we will draw from Audubon's deep well of regional experience in Latin America and the Caribbean, and our expertise in science,

"It's essential to mainstream nature-based solutions into national and local development plans to achieve conservation and sustainable-development impacts at a scale that matters. The work of Audubon and their partners illustrates that this is feasible when done with shared vision and inclusive, persistent, and continuous work."

—**Mirei Endara de Heras**, Former Minister of the Environment, Panama

engagement, and policy. We will also support and link to national conservation and socio-economic efforts already underway, many of which are driven by international conservation commitments such as...

- UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- The Paris Climate Agreement and each country's nationally determined contributions (NDCs)
- The Convention on Biological Diversity, including initiatives to protect 30 percent of terrestrial and marine ecosystems by 2030 (30x30)



STRATEGY 1: SUBNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PROTECTED AREAS

Audubon will work with partners to establish more than 80 new protected areas covering 2 million hectares and improve management of an additional 2 million hectares.



STRATEGY 2: WORKING LANDS

Audubon and partners will work with farmers to create healthier habitats for wildlife while expanding productivity and profit for farmers on 5 million hectares of agricultural lands in once-forested landscapes.



STRATEGY 3: COASTAL RESILIENCE

Audubon and partners aim to restore or improve the management of 1 million hectares of coastal habitat.



STRATEGY 4: BUILDING A CONSTITUENCY FOR WILDLIFE

We will build public commitment to conservation by engaging one million people across the hemisphere.

MAINSTREAMING BIRD CONSERVATION: OUR FOUR STRATEGIES

Our conservation strategies are designed to address and mitigate the largest threats wildlife and biodiversity and to deliver lasting economic and environmental benefits for people. We employ market-based approaches to encourage local buy-in, scalability, and long-term conservation sustainability.

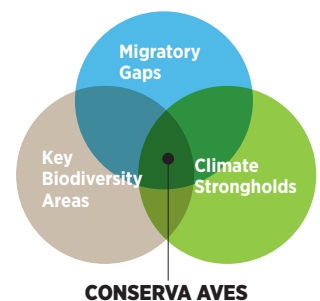
These strategies are based on models that have the potential to achieve impact at scale with the highest return on conservation investments. We will escalate proven techniques for regenerative agriculture, coastal resilience, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. We will also incubate promising models, test and advance them, and disseminate them through public and private partnerships and distributed networks of local partners. Here is a brief description of our strategies:

STRATEGY 1: SUBNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PROTECTED AREAS

Well-managed protected areas are essential to sustaining populations of birds and other wildlife and reversing their decline. But a 2014 global assessment indicated that only 15 percent of threatened vertebrates are adequately protected within existing reserves—many of which have inadequate technical and financial capacity

Audubon will work with partners to establish more than **80 new protected areas covering 2 million hectares** (4.9 million acres) and improve management of an additional 2 million hectares. We will focus on sites where priority areas for migratory birds overlap with Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and climate strongholds. These new conservation endeavors will support and align with national 30x30 initiatives as well as initiatives to build bird- and wildlife-based tourism.

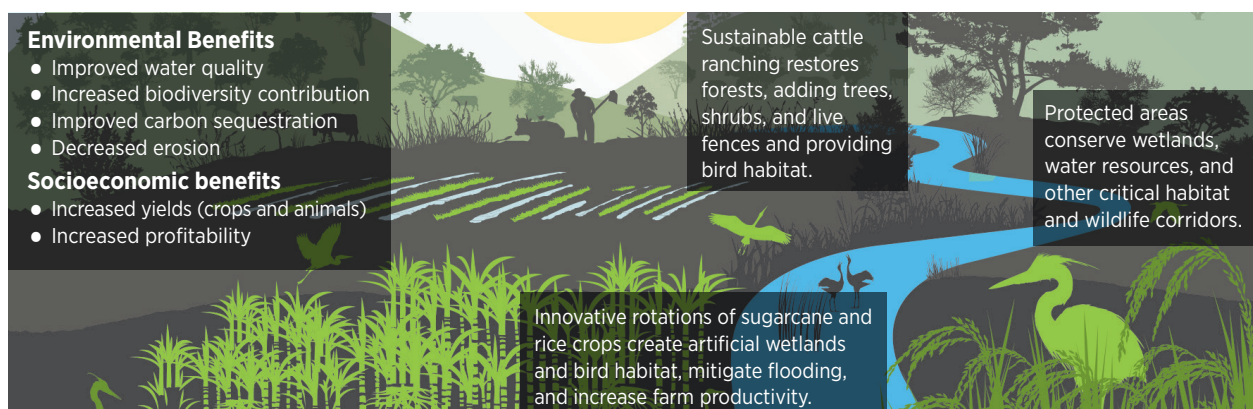
The core of this strategy is Conserva Aves, an innovative partnership among Audubon, BirdLife International, American Bird Conservancy, and the Network of Latin American and Caribbean Environmental Funds (RedLAC). The concept is rooted in a successful model, Conserva Colombia, which raised \$1.8 million to create 95 protected areas (202,000 hectares/499,000 acres) in four years, trained more than 40 NGO partners, provided science, and led collaborative conservation and fundraising efforts.



STRATEGY 2: WORKING LANDS

Audubon and partners will work with landowners to create **healthier habitats for priority birds and other wildlife on 5 million hectares (12 million acres) of agricultural lands**, particularly in once-forested landscapes. These lands serve as migratory corridors between forest blocks and protected areas and improve environmental benefits for people, including food and water security, flood prevention, and climate mitigation.

To achieve this goal, we will integrate wildlife habitat needs into techniques such as silvopastoral systems for cattle ranching as well as restoration and crop-rotation models that create artificial wetlands on sugar and rice plantations. Already prototyped in Colombia, these systems have boosted yields and income for farmers and communities while demonstrating significant environmental benefits.



STRATEGY 3: COASTAL RESILIENCE

Mangroves are critical species at the intersection of freshwater, marine, and terrestrial ecosystems. They provide a number of benefits, including protection from coastal erosion and storm damage, natural filters for pollution and sediment, and carbon sequestration. They serve as habitats for shorebirds and nurseries for fish. An estimated 80 percent of global fish catches are directly or indirectly dependent on mangroves.

Yet mangroves are among the most threatened habitats on Earth, with an annual loss outpacing other tropical rainforests. Through our coastal resilience strategy, Audubon and partners aim to **restore or improve the management of 1 million hectares (2.5 million acres) of coastal ecosystems**. We will achieve this goal by...

- mainstreaming nature-based and green infrastructure solutions into national and regional planning, policy, and implementation—to encourage smarter development and preserve the valuable services that intact coastal habitats provide
- quantifying and articulating the economic value of coastal ecosystems in terms of reducing climate change risk and protecting public health
- convening coastal development, resilience, and conservation organizations and advocates around the common goals that unite them.



STRATEGY 4: BUILDING A CONSTITUENCY FOR BIRDS

Over the past half-decade, the explosion of awareness and popularity of birding and ecotourism in Latin America and the Caribbean has been extraordinary, especially among young people. Audubon and its partners will continue to build momentum and public commitment to the conservation of biodiversity by **engaging one million people across the hemisphere**. As we harness public enthusiasm, we will also build a strong economic case for advancing conservation agendas.

“People come to our region from around the world because we have the best birding on Earth. Bird tourism has become part of our efforts to build a community that is empowered and self-sufficient, and engaged in sustainable economic development.”

—Birding Guide **Dora Guzmán González**,
Quindío, Colombia



Demonstrating the economic value of biodiversity is an essential component for creating local and regional conditions that help to protect wildlife. We will deploy our communication, policy advocacy, and community-engagement expertise to promote awareness of the vital link between the environment and human health. We will support the development of National Plans for the Conservation of Birds and mainstream their value into national and local development plans. We will also continue to strengthen the wildlife tourism sector following our successful bird-tourism model that has been applied in five countries.

(See the full Business Plan for detailed data and descriptions of our strategies.)

MAINSTREAMING BIRD CONSERVATION

TARGETING OUR WORK FOR THE GREATEST IMPACT

Audubon aims to conserve 10 million hectares of important wildlife habitat in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2026 and 40 million hectares by 2030.

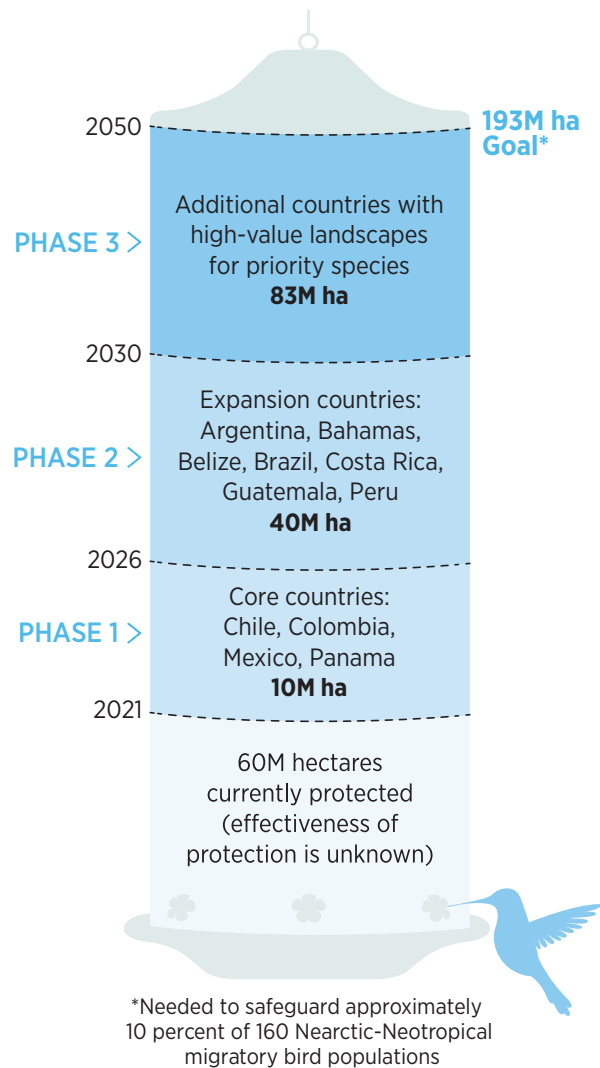
Audubon's first step in the development of our plan was to establish a "north star" goal, quantifying the amount of habitat needed to effectively protect migratory birds and other priority species in Latin America and the Caribbean. Using the latest peer-reviewed science and data from the Migratory Bird Initiative, we determined a target of **193 million hectares (477 million acres)—an area roughly the size of Mexico.** (See the full Business Plan for complete methodology.)



Only 31 percent of this area is currently protected, although the effectiveness of protection is unknown. We intend to protect another 50 million hectares (124 million acres) by 2030 via a phased approach that includes multiple conservation strategies, intensive collaboration with a wide array of stakeholder-partners, and a clear vision for large-scale conservation.

Here's how we'll do it:

- In the near term (2021-2026), Audubon will focus on conserving **10 million hectares** (25 million acres). We will concentrate on habitats of highest value to migratory birds and threatened and endemic species, factoring in future climate strongholds. We will test and scale pilots and demonstration projects across **priority habitats in four core countries: Colombia, Panama, Chile, and Mexico.** Within these countries Audubon has identified landscapes that need immediate attention and are of outsized importance to conservation goals. Examples include Panama Bay and Colombia's Cauca Valley.



- During Phase 2 (2026-2030), as our strategies gain traction and as new partnerships take hold, our goal increases to **40 million hectares** (99 million acres) of conserved land in seven additional countries.
- Phase 3 (2030 and onward) expands our work to priority landscapes in other countries in the region, as opportunities emerge and capacity grows.

OUR 2026 GOALS

Over the next five years, Audubon's International Alliances Program will scale up our focus on Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) ecosystems. At the same time, we will continue to execute our existing strategy in Canada's boreal forests. Here are the highlights:

Conservation for wildlife and people

- Create at least 80 new protected areas totaling 2 million hectares (4.9 million acres) and improve conservation of an additional 2 million hectares of protected lands and 6 million hectares (15 million acres) of coastal and agricultural lands.
- Prioritize techniques with a potential to significantly affect climate mitigation and adaptation (including coastal resilience).
- Stabilize populations and reverse declines of priority species via an intensive focus on high-priority habitats.

Our conservation strategies apply the latest science and balance economic development needs to ensure that conservation is viable and durable for local communities.

Practices and policies

- Develop playbooks to guide local stakeholders toward proven conservation strategies for agriculture, including regenerative cattle ranching and lower-impact practices for sugarcane and other crops.
- Help local stakeholders increase coastal resilience, with an emphasis on sustainable and cost-effective infrastructure solutions, water sanitation, and municipal adaptation.
- Mainstream conservation policies into development plans in Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Panama.
- Establish legislation and policies advancing conservation and nature-based solutions in each of our core countries.

We aim to expand the constituency for birds and other wildlife by demonstrating the value of bird data to indicate ecosystem health and measure the impacts of nature-based solutions.



Bird guides in training work on identifying species at Reserva Natural La Planada, in the southwestern department of Narino, Colombia.

Partnerships

- Establish strategic multi-sector partnerships that can drive change at a hemispheric level.
- Train and strengthen more than 100 local partner organizations.
- Focus at least 30 percent of our conservation agenda on marginalized areas and communities, with an emphasis on empowering local conservation leaders.

By investing in strong, strategic, and diverse partnerships at all levels, we can integrate bird conservation into national and local development agendas.

Strategic investment

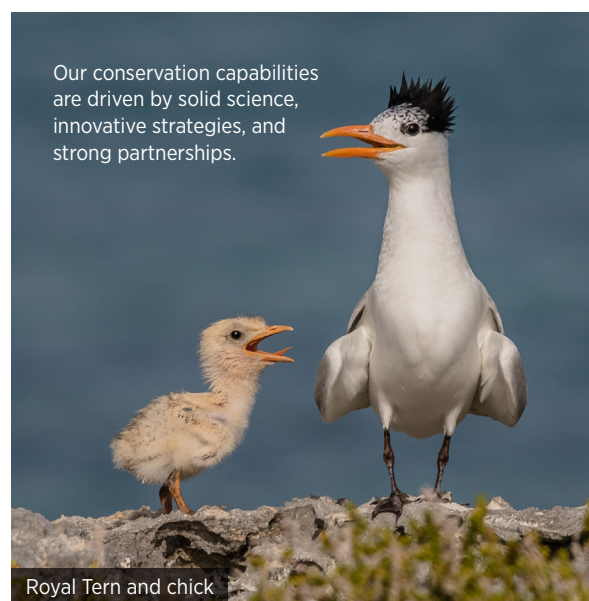
- Directly invest more than \$40 million to support priorities for conservation and sustainable economic development across the LAC region.
- Magnify this support with an additional \$55M in leverage funding for our partners, and influence an additional \$285 million in conservation spending through partnerships, policy initiatives, and other investments.

Our first-phase initiatives concentrate on five core countries: Colombia, Panama, Chile, Mexico, and Canada.

WHY AUDUBON?

Audubon is uniquely positioned to mobilize the conservation actors and actions needed to secure a positive future for birds and other wildlife, and the places they need to survive and thrive.

No other organization is as well-positioned as Audubon to lead this unprecedented conservation effort. Our legacy is built on science, education, policy, on-the-ground conservation, and the collaborative networks we have built. We bring the power of birds to engage and inspire, a committed network of 1.9 million supporters, and relationships with critical partner organizations.



We offer...

- **A hemispheric presence and track record.** Birds provide the connectivity that links habitats throughout the hemisphere. Audubon has a long track record and expanding presence in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada. Our brand is widely recognized in the places we work, and synonymous with conservation.
- **Strategies informed by the latest migratory bird science.** Audubon's Migratory Bird Initiative and international science team apply the latest data to guide our international priorities and measure program impact. This ensures that conservation investments are made where they will produce the greatest return. Audubon is also able to quantify and communicate the co-benefits of conservation to climate-change mitigation, human well-being, and economic development.

"Birds are perfect ambassadors for the nature-based solutions needed to ensure water, food, and energy security, as well as climate-change adaptation. We hope to continue working closely with Audubon to consolidate leadership in the conservation of birds and natural capital."

—**Hernando Garcia**, General Director,
Alexander von Humboldt Biological
Resources Research Institute

- **Valued partnerships.** Audubon's access to a vast international network positions the organization to leverage and expand our influence. Our network includes international and local conservation NGOs, research institutions, and policy makers. We will empower local people and organizations through training, capacity building, and connection to a coordinated strategy. We'll also bring in partners such as ministries of tourism and agriculture, development banks, and industry leaders.
- **Innovation that delivers conservation impact at scale—for people and for birds.** Wildlife conservation agendas get more traction when they are aligned with broader socioeconomic objectives. By emphasizing the connection between healthy habitats and factors essential for human well-being—such as job creation, improved climate resilience, and health and food-security

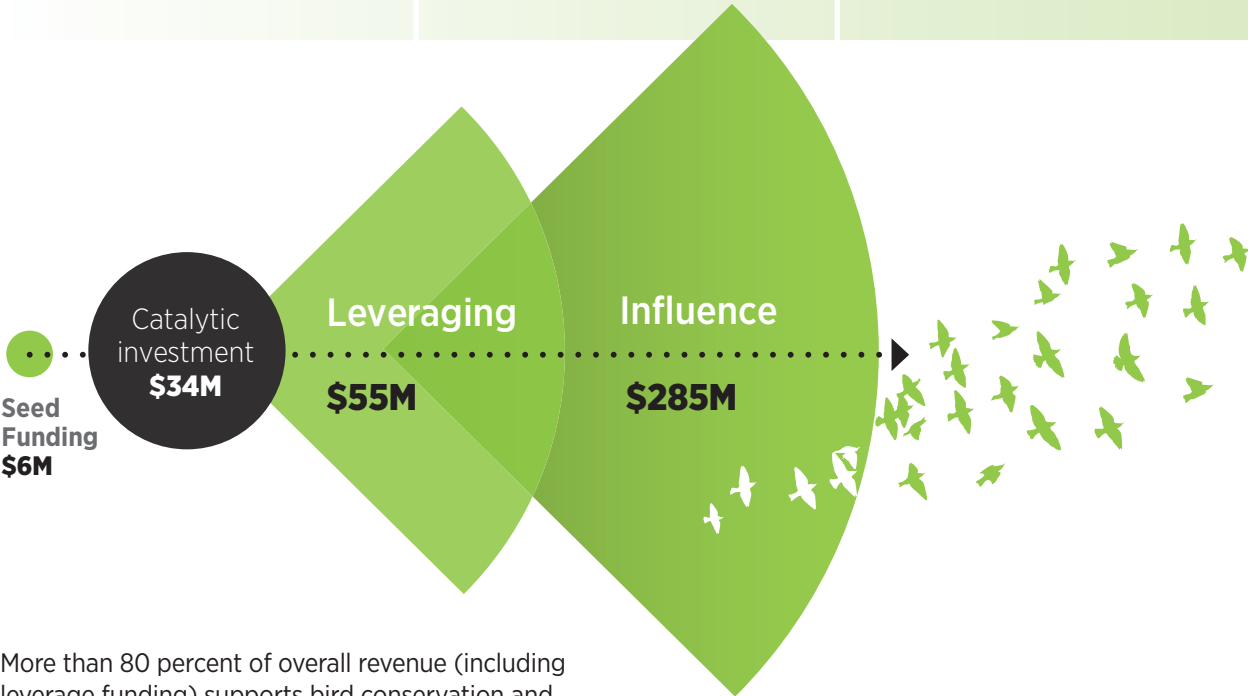
From the birding community to large conservation programs, Audubon is recognized for its ability to convene and catalyze the people and organizations that care about wildlife, biodiversity, and human well-being.

INVESTMENT PLAN: A PHASED APPROACH

Audubon is seeking investments for on-the-ground conservation, pilot projects, capacity building, and core operations over the next five years. Our funding strategy is designed to magnify seed funding so that even moderate investments during the plan's initial stages will have a very

significant conservation impact. Overall, we expect that \$20M+ in private philanthropy will create proof points needed to attract \$20M in public and corporate support to fund expansion, plus \$55M in leverage funding for our partners.

ROUND 1 INVESTMENT NEED \$10.5M by June 2022	ROUND 2 INVESTMENT NEED \$25.5M over FY23 and FY24	ROUND 3 INVESTMENT NEED \$59M over FY25 and FY26
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$6M initial seed funding from individual investors and foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$8M private funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$6M private funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$1.5M public and corporate funding, while we build capacity to secure larger public funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$5.5M public and corporate funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$13M public and corporate funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$3M leverage funding invested directly in partner projects aligned with strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$12M leverage funding invested directly in partner projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$40M leverage funding invested directly in partner projects



More than 80 percent of overall revenue (including leverage funding) supports bird conservation and strengthens local partners and communities.

LET'S KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Audubon envisions a resilient future where the people, birds, and nature of the Americas thrive; where public policy and individual and community choices reflect the essential link between economic prosperity and ecological health; and where sustainable forests, mangroves, grasslands, rivers, and beaches provide rich habitat for birds and other wildlife and vital environmental benefits for communities throughout the hemisphere.

Realizing our vision will require creative thinking and a dedicated commitment from everyone who

values the exceptional work we do, and who recognizes our potential to reach even greater heights. We look forward to your participation in this unprecedented conservation effort, and we thank you for your support.

Together, we can create a brighter future for the birds, wildlife, and human communities of the Americas.



Bird guides pose for a group photo at Reserva Natural La Planada, a nature reserve in the southwestern department of Narino, Colombia in 2019. The workshop, in partnership with the National Audubon Society, will give locals the tools they need to successfully guide tours on the Southwest Andes Birding Trail.

A mountain top view of Reserva Natural La Planada, a nature reserve in the southwestern department of Narino, Colombia.



Audubon

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