

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Building Bird Safe

Local Architects Incorporate New Technologies into Eco-conscious Homes

An unsettling thought crept into Danielle Foisy's mind during the lecture: "What have we done? Have we made a death trap for birds?"

An architect at Kaplan Thompson, Foisy was in the middle of a major rebuild-in-place project on the coast of Maine. The clients were eco-conscious, the building would be all-electric and Net Zero Energy, incorporate native plantings and a green roof, and use local lumber, but bird safety wasn't on their radar—or the design team's. Now, as she watched the 2019 guest lecture on "Birds and Buildings" by architect Nick Liadis, hosted at the Maine College of Art, she knew she had to do something.

Large windows taking advantage of ocean views were a design priority, so she focused there. She researched solutions and identified windows in the existing design that were at greatest risk of bird strikes: corner windows, those that reflected vegetation, large picture windows, and those without large exterior screens. She worked with glass supplier Marvin Windows to specify windows with UV glazing, meaning they were visible to birds but didn't impact views for humans.

But using windows with UV glass meant additional costs, and Foisy wasn't sure how the clients would react. Thankfully, once aware of the issues at hand, they felt it was the right thing to do—even revealing problems with bird collisions at their current house. As a bonus, Foisy discovered that the UV glass reduced solar heat gain potential in the home, and helped keep the airy home cool in summer. A total of 16 cutting-edge UV-glazed windows will be installed, along with fully-shaded exterior lighting to minimize attracting migrating birds at night.

Foisy told her story at a webinar hosted this summer by the Portland Society for Architecture, one of Maine Audubon's partners in bird safe work, while other architects on the panel shared their stories of waking up to the use of bird safe technologies in their buildings. Awareness is growing among Maine architects, and bird-safe technology is poised to become the next big thing in sustainable design.

First Session
of the
130th Maine Legislature

Legislative and Advocacy 2021 UPDATE

The attribute that characterized the first session of Maine's 130th Legislature was determination. Determination not to let the pandemic stand in the way of getting work done. Determination to make progress on climate action and other environmental priorities. Determination to take advantage of opportunities to do the right thing.

And it worked. Legislators hit the ground running this session, picking up on progress made during the second session of the 129th Legislature last year and taking advantage of an administration in Washington that is now willing to support progress on climate change, renewable energy, and other environmental priorities.

Maine Audubon members helped us achieve some incredible wins this session. Our records show that Maine Audubon members and supporters sent more than 4,500 messages to their representatives in 2021, nearly double what they sent in 2020. Our voices were heard, and as a result many of our priority bills passed, including some that had been stymied for years.

Make sure you're part of the success by joining our Action Network to stay up to date on all policy issues impacting Maine's wildlife and habitat. Go to maineaudubon.org/act to sign up!

Yours in conservation,



Eliza Donoghue, Esq.

Director of Advocacy and Staff Attorney



Progress: Maine's Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan (CAP), finalized in December 2020, was a major priority this session. A number of legislative issues we worked on focused on taking recommendations of the Climate Action Plan and making them a reality.



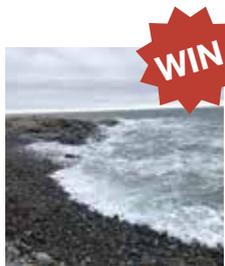
Climate Action Plan Goal: Conserve Natural and Working Lands by Securing Essential Land Conservation Funding

This was identified as a CAP priority, as natural lands store large amounts of carbon. Maine Audubon has long advocated for the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) program, a popular and successful program that had not received new funding since 2012. That all changed at the very end of the session, when LMF funds were included in the state budget, giving this vital program \$40M over four years. This is a major win for climate resilience, wildlife, and outdoor recreation.



Climate Action Plan Goal: Increase Renewable Energy Production and Guide Thoughtful Renewable Energy Siting

A challenging but critical goal in the battle against climate change is to increase the state's renewable energy portfolio while protecting wildlife and habitat. We supported two bills related to offshore wind energy and were pleased that they both passed. LD 336 and LD 1619 help the state get started on a grouping of floating turbines some 40 miles off the Maine coast in federal waters, which are critical for researching potential impacts to wildlife. We also supported the passage of LD 802, which establishes standards for the decommissioning of solar projects when they reach the end of their lives, and LD 820, which will convene a stakeholder group to make policy recommendations on responsibly sited solar.



Climate Action Plan Goal: Build Climate Resilient Communities by Improving Land Use Planning and Smart Growth

Climate change will continue to cause sea levels to rise along the Maine coast, threatening critical wildlife habitat and coastal towns. Maine Audubon was a leading supporter of LD 1572, which required Maine state agencies to update their rules and regulations to incorporate the latest science and projections on sea level rise, helping Maine better prepare for and manage a changing coast. We were pleased to see the bill pass through the legislature and receive the governor's signature in mid-June.

More Climate Work to Come

Maine Audubon continues to provide input as a member of the Natural and Working Lands Working Group and help push processes to: install properly-sited renewable energy; engage with Maine communities and students on climate education; and support weatherization, electric vehicles, green infrastructure, and much more.

Other Legislative Victories



Neonicotinoid Pesticide Ban

Neonicotinoid pesticides are known to harm bees, eventually leading to colony collapse, with ripple effects on plants, birds, and other systems. Maine Audubon was proud to support LD 155, which banned the use of neonics in many parts of the state, and was pleased to help the bill pass the legislature. It received the governor's signature in June.



Cracking Down on Plastic Pollution

Seabird biologists know discarded balloons to be one of the most common causes of mortality for seabirds and sea turtles. Balloons, however, were not widely recognized as litter until LD 1023, with strong support from Maine Audubon, was signed into law this session. The bill sets up fines for the intentional release of large numbers of balloons. What's more, Maine became the first state in the nation to establish an Extended Producer Responsibility program, which makes manufacturers responsible for the recycling of their products rather than putting the burden on towns and taxpayers.



Defending Plastic Bag Ban

Several bills attempted to reverse Maine's progress in banning single-use plastic bags, one of the most insidious forms of plastic pollution. Maine Audubon worked hard to oppose the rollback of our important progress, and was pleased to see that none of these harmful bills gained traction.

Work to do Next Session

It was a banner session for many of our priority bills, but we didn't get everything we wanted. There's important work to do regarding lead ammunition, which can remain in deer, wild turkey, and other game carcasses often scavenged by Bald Eagles and other species. Maine Audubon is working with the state on increased educational opportunities for hunters in Maine, and considering what legislative fixes might be warranted. Additionally, a Maine Audubon-supported bill to give sovereignty to Maine's indigenous tribes was pushed to the legislature's second session, hopefully giving advocates more time to make their case for this overdue legislation.