OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023

Bird populations and species diversity are declining in Seattle as a result of climate change and urban hazards. Birds Connect Seattle understands the deep connection between the health of both birds and people in our city. We envision our local cities integrating and valuing nature, minimizing threats to birds, and protecting habitat.

Urban Conservation
We will advocate for bird-safe cities with a new emphasis on reducing anticoagulant rodenticide use, maintaining our city’s tree canopy, and promoting bird-friendly building practices. All our programs will include specific conservation calls to action for participants.

Equity
We are taking steps to understand and eradicate racial inequity and injustice in our field and in our own organization, shifting our culture and practices to create welcoming spaces where everyone can enjoy the wonder of birds and nature.

Resilience
We will continue to be excellent stewards of our existing resources as we simultaneously work to diversify and enhance our funding sources. We will further develop our valued staff, board and leadership to maximize retention.

Varied Thrush | Mick Thompson | Eastside Audubon
Protecting the future for birds and people

Your generosity makes it possible

As a staff-led and volunteer powered organization, Birds Connect Seattle makes the most of every dollar.

Our members and donors are essential to:

- **inspire** the next generation of bird advocates through education programs and community engagement strategies
- **support** our community science surveys which monitor local bird populations including several threatened species
- **advocate** for Seattle to become a safer city for birds through our conservation efforts to reduce urban hazards

**For Over 100 years**

Since 1916, Birds Connect Seattle has been at the forefront of protecting birds and habitats. The oldest conservation organization in Washington, we focus on the urban environment, local bird species, and Pacific Northwest land, trees, and waters that need our help.

**Conservation Can't Wait**

For some local bird species it may already be too late, but for others like the Varied Thrush, and Red-breasted Nuthatch, we still have a narrow window to change their long-term survival prospects. Urban birds face unique hazards including rodenticides, glass collisions, and tree canopy loss. If we act swiftly and collaboratively, we can protect both the people and birds that call Seattle home.
Developing Cities at the Center led to the creation of Birds Connect Seattle's new mission, vision, and values that guide to our strategy.

MISSION
Birds Connect Seattle advocates and organizes for cities where people and birds thrive.

VISION
Birds Connect Seattle envisions cities that integrate and value nature, minimize threats to birds, and protect habitat.

VALUES
We are a community of passionate, talented, and unique individuals, and our service is Birds Connect Seattle’s most valuable resource. As a staff-led and volunteer powered organization, we value:

- **Inspiration.** Birds inspire and inform conservation in a unique and powerful way.
- **Interconnectedness.** The health of birds and their habitats is tied to human health.
- **Equity and Inclusion.** Equity and inclusion are necessary to achieve our mission.
- **Diversity.** Diverse perspectives strengthen our understanding of birds, our community, and the environment.
- **Humility.** There are infinite ways to experience and enjoy birds and nature respectfully.
- **Collaboration.** We are most successful when we collaborate within and outside the organization.
- **Science.** Our policies and programs must be informed by science.
**Urban Conservation**

**Goal #1:** Birds Connect Seattle will focus internal resources and develop relationships with key partners, including Seattle-area city leaders, to pursue strategies that reduce urban hazards to birds, prioritizing bird-safe building practices and anticoagulant rodenticide use reduction.

**Goal #2:** Birds Connect Seattle will promote bird conservation through inclusion of conservation-based messages and actions in all activities.

**Equity**

**Goal #3:** Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to increase BIPOC leadership through internal analysis, and policy and cultural changes.

**Resilience**

**Goal #4:** Develop staff, board, and committee leadership to increase retention.

**Goal #5:** Limit net operating deficit and preserve the value of our real assets.

Osprey | David Lin | Audubon Photography Awards
Strategic Goal #1: Birds Connect Seattle will focus internal resources and develop relationships with key partners, including Seattle-area city leaders, to pursue strategies that reduce urban hazards to birds, prioritizing bird-safe building practices and anticoagulant rodenticide use reduction.

Hazards in the built environment present serious threats to birds. Glass and unshielded nighttime lighting are estimated to kill up to a billion birds per year in the United States and studies have detected anticoagulant rodenticides in between 49-91% of necropsied raptors. Unlike urban habitat protection/enhancement, cats indoors, and climate change, there are few, if any, other organizations addressing collision, lighting, and rodenticides in our service area. A “Bird-safe Cities” program aligns perfectly with our urban conservation focus, addresses urgent threats to birds, and will allow us to become leading advocates on issues we “own.”

We will accomplish this by:

- Completing a strategic advocacy campaign that seeks to influence building design practices and rodent control strategies alongside key partners and community decision makers.
- Ensuring that all our conservation work prioritizes equity and inclusion.
- Continuing to advance and participate in coalitions for other urban issues including keeping cats indoors, habitat preservation and enhancement, climate change, and other emerging issues.

Canada Goose | Joshua Ellis | Audubon Photography Awards
**Strategic Goal #2: Birds Connect Seattle will promote bird conservation through inclusion of conservation-based messages and actions in all activities.**

Birds Connect Seattle’s programs have long operated within three silos: education, science, and conservation. Although birds and habitat have existed within each silo, there has been little consistent messaging or comingling of programming. The aim of this goal is to have the same conservation messages embedded throughout everything Birds Connect Seattle offers, including: age-appropriate adaptations for youth, ties to The Nature Shop merchandise and displays, and a shift in focus from strictly bird ID field trips and classes to offerings that also incorporate actions to protect birds and their habitats. The continued drive to mobilize our science data to inform the conservation efforts of our organization and others must be similarly focused. A consistent message, adapted to be relevant for each audience, will amplify that Birds Connect Seattle exists to help all appreciate, understand, and protect birds and their habitats.

We will accomplish this by:

- Training staff and volunteers who lead and teach participants or communicate with the public to be conversant and teach about our conservation initiatives.
- Incorporating age-appropriate conservation messaging and age-appropriate direct action in our children's programming.
- Ending all adult gatherings with a call to action.
- Shifting website traffic from species pages to conservation and priority pages.
- Connecting The Nature Shop digital and physical product promotions to conservation priorities.
- Expanding opportunities for The Nature Shop to serve as a demonstration site for conservation initiatives.
- Redesigning The Nature Shop gallery as conservation-focused space for both Seattle Audubon and partners, for events and passive use.
- Aligning The Nature Shop inventory with current conservation priorities and organizational values.
- Building and implementing a comprehensive Communications Plan to include conservation messaging across all channels.
- Serving conservation initiatives with Community science program outputs.
**Strategic Goal #3: Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to increase BIPOC leadership through internal analysis, and policy and cultural changes.**

Birds Connect Seattle is committed to understanding and eradicating structural racial inequity at every level of our work, and creating spaces and programs that are accessible and welcoming to all. This goal was created with the understanding that we have failed at authentically engaging Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in the past by not holding ourselves accountable to the work or allocating time and resources needed to do so. Birds Connect Seattle will establish a plan to use as a framework for regular and ongoing implementation and evaluation of equitable best practices at every level of our work to remove barriers to engagement and increase BIPOC representation throughout the organization. This goal also aims to spark a shift in culture to one of equity and inclusion by engaging our community in EDI focused conversations and trainings in order to work towards a shared understanding of EDI concepts and issues. This goal is of utmost important to our work as diverse perspectives strengthen our understanding of birds, our community, and the environment.

We will accomplish this by:

- Developing and communicating a new organization diversity statement.
- Conducting a culture audit in partnership with a consultant that has a relevant skillset and understanding of our goals.
- Requiring and explicitly stating EDI work in all staff job descriptions and Committee Charters.
- Conducting an environmental scan of EDI initiatives at 12 nonprofit organizations of similar size, structure, and focus.
- Completing EDI focused training(s) for all forward facing volunteer leaders, Board, and staff.
- Revising staff hiring and board recruitment tactics to achieve a minimum of 25% BIPOC representation.
Strategic Goal #4: Develop staff, board, and committee leadership to increase retention.

Turnover makes it difficult to gain traction on significant initiatives in programming or fundraising and undermines our reputation with donors, volunteers, and the wider community. Birds Connect Seattle would like to focus on the retention and development of staff and board leadership.

We will accomplish this by:

- Ensuring staff compensation remains consistent with industry standards.
- Establishing a periodic 360-review and feedback process for all positions including an exit interview process.
- Designing a volunteer leadership appreciation strategy.
- Ensuring consistent and thorough onboarding and orientation to organization and position.
- Facilitating mentorship or peer support connections for board members and committee chairs.
- Nurturing emerging staff and volunteer leaders to support succession planning.
Strategic Goal #5: Limit net operating deficit and preserve the value of our real assets.

Birds Connect Seattle, and indeed the entire world, finds itself in the grip of a global pandemic, causing unprecedented uncertainty for our finances and programming. At the outset of what is sure to be a widespread recession, the need to carefully steward our resources is more important than ever before. Birds Connect Seattle is fortunate to have recommended levels of reserves on hand, but the uncertain timeline for a return to “normal” operations demands a measured approach to the use of these finite resources.

We will accomplish this by:
- Limiting deficit spending by stabilizing earned and contributed income, prioritizing cost savings in non-employee expenses, and allocating our reserves.
- Preserving the value of our real assets by better leveraging our assets and reducing liabilities.
- Supporting ongoing operations by exploring development of a $1M endowment campaign.