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**North Carolina's Bird Species Threatened by Global Warming 'Gut Punch'  
New Audubon Study Reveals**

*Brown-headed Nuthatches and Piping Plovers Could Disappear Without Action*

**Chapel Hill, NC (Sep. 9, 2014)** – Global warming threatens more than half the bird species in the continental United States and Canada warn National Audubon Society scientists in [a groundbreaking new study released today](#). Local birds at risk in North Carolina include the Golden-winged Warbler, Brown-headed Nuthatch and American Oystercatcher.

“The results of this study are our wake-up call; we know with certainty that our birds are in trouble and not all of them will be able to survive in a changing climate without our help,” said Audubon North Carolina Executive Director Heather Hahn. “Major declines in bird populations could happen within our children’s lifetime if we don’t take action now. Just like the canaries in the coal mines, these birds are sounding the alarm that it’s time for people to act before it’s too late.”

Of the 588 continental United States and Canadian bird species examined in the seven-year study, 314 species are at risk. Of those, about 1 in 5, 126 species, are at risk of severe declines by 2050, and a further 188 species face the same fate by 2080, with numerous extinctions possible if global warming is allowed to erase the havens birds occupy today.

In North Carolina, citizens have a unique opportunity to protect a wide range of bird species threatened by climate change from the mountains to the piedmont to the coastal plain. Audubon NC scientists are integrating the report results into existing programs and projects to continue to support birds through conservation of crucial habitat.

[Click here for media resources, including an animation introducing the science, video interviews and more.](#)

“The greatest threat our birds face today is global warming,” said Audubon Chief Scientist Gary Langham, who led the investigation. “That’s our unequivocal conclusion after seven years of painstakingly careful and thorough research. Global warming threatens the basic fabric of life on which birds – and the rest of us – depend, and we have to act quickly and decisively if we are going to avoid catastrophe for them and us.”

Langham and other Audubon ornithologists analyzed more than 40 years of historical North American climate data and millions of historical bird records from the U.S. Geological Survey’s North American Breeding Bird Survey and the Audubon Christmas Bird Count to understand the links between where birds live and the climatic conditions that support them. Understanding those links then allows scientists to project where birds are likely to be able to survive – and not survive – in the future.

Audubon's study shows how climate conditions including rainfall, temperature and humidity – the building blocks for ecosystems and species survival – may have catastrophic consequences when tipping those balances.

While some species will be able to adapt to shifting climates, many of North America’s most familiar and iconic species will not.

"The prospect of such staggering loss is horrific, but we can build a bridge to the future for America's birds," said Audubon President and CEO David Yarnold. "We know that if we help avoid the worst impacts of climate change for birds, we're doing the same for our kids. And this new report can be a roadmap to help birds weather the storm of global warming."

Audubon today launched a new web portal - [Audubon.org/Climate](https://www.audubon.org/climate) - dedicated to understanding the links between birds and global warming, including animated maps and photographs of the 314 species at risk, a technical report, and in-depth stories from the September-October issue of Audubon magazine, which is also devoted to the topic.

Hahn added, “We know that the study adds a renewed sense of urgency to protect the places birds and people live today, prepare for the future, and do everything we can to reduce the severity of global warming before it’s too late.”

The study, which was funded in part by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has numerous implications for conservation, public policy and further research and provides a new suite of tools for scientists, conservationists, land managers and policy makers. For more information about links between birds and global warming, including animated maps and photographs of the 314 species, visit [Audubon.org/Climate](https://www.audubon.org/climate).

### **About Audubon North Carolina**

With a century of conservation history in North Carolina, Audubon strives to conserve

and restore the habitats we share with all wildlife, focusing on the needs of birds. [Audubon North Carolina](#) achieves its mission through a blend of science-based research and conservation, education and outreach, and advocacy. Audubon North Carolina has offices in Corolla, Boone, Wilmington and Chapel Hill.

**About The National Audubon Society**

The National Audubon Society saves birds and their habitats throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground conservation. Audubon's state programs, nature centers, chapters and partners have an unparalleled wingspan that reaches millions of people each year to inform, inspire and unite diverse communities in conservation action. Since 1905, Audubon's vision has been a world in which people and wildlife thrive. Audubon is a nonprofit conservation organization. Learn more at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org) and follow [@audubonsociety](#).