



Presque Isle
Audubon

Presque Isle Audubon's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan

Purpose

This strategic plan was developed over the course of 24 months, beginning in July of 2013 and concluding in June of 2015. It represents an evolution of thought and effort, with contributions coming from many members. The intention of this plan is to set a roadmap for continuing Presque Isle Audubon's long history of doing work which benefits birds, the environment, and the people in our community. While the plan is not meant to be exclusive and limiting the group to only what is contained within, it is meant to help steer decisions through a common and shared vision for a period of five years.

In order to develop this plan, the Strategic Planning Committee spent time reviewing plans from numerous Audubon chapter organizations, the National Audubon plan, the National Audubon Climate Change Report, and many other foundational documents. The result of the extensive research and review process is that our plan in many ways mirrors that of those that face similar obstacles and shared interests. Our chapter is unique however, and so many aspects of the strategies and goals were written or edited to be purposeful to our region.

At the heart of the strategies and goals found within this report is the mission statement of Presque Isle Audubon

“To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the enjoyment and benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity in northwestern Pennsylvania.”

This mission, which was developed by the Strategic Planning Committee and adopted by the Executive Board, reflects the essence of the organization and its historical commitment to birds, ecosystems, and the people of the Erie region.

Our Strategies

There are many ways to achieve goals, however it is valuable to make specific choices in the strategies employed so that the organization can focus efforts and resources. To that end, we have elected to focus our efforts in three strategies:

A. Saving Important Bird Areas and Significant Habitats

The Important Bird Areas within the Presque Isle Audubon area (Erie and Crawford Counties) are magnets for birds and people alike. They are designated to protect nesting and migratory bird species that rely on the unique habitats provided. The IBAs in the PIA region are all state recognized:[1]

Roderick Wildlife Preserve - SGL 314
Presque Isle Bay Martin Roost
Presque Isle State Park
Hemlock Hill Research Area (Private land)
Cussewago Bottoms
Pymatuning, Hartstown Complex
Conneaut Marsh - Geneva Marsh
Erie National Wildlife Refuge

These IBAs, along with other significant habitats, including, but not limited to, Erie Bluffs State Park in western Erie County, PIA sanctuaries Titus Bog, Fernwood and Laura Olsen Memorial Sanctuary, as well as the Erie city shoreline and other locations in both counties have much diversity. Unfortunately, human activity and development has caused habitat loss, disruption and fragmentation, placing birds that rely on these habitats at risk, but there is still much to protect or improve.

Through active advocacy for stewardship and developing ways for more people to become educated about these unique habitats and the species they harbor, PIA can develop a growing army of volunteer caretakers of nesting habitat and stopover site for migrating birds. PIAS can contribute to the preservation of these habitats by 1) encouraging participation in programs like Weed Warriors at PISP, 2) offering educational programs that highlight the species found within these habitats, and 3) publically support policies and practices that will reduce threats to these environments.

B. Creating Bird Friendly Communities

The Erie region is made up of many diverse locales-from urban to rural, and people can play a critical role in fostering healthy wildlife populations and communities. As the leading voice for birds in the Erie region, PIA can inspire the one in five adults who watch birds to make daily lifestyle choices that add up to real conservation impact. We can also foster bird-friendly communities by developing a membership that can actively participate in PIA activities, education, and citizen science projects.

C. PIA Organizational Development

Formed in 1957 and becoming affiliated as a chapter of National Audubon in 1961, Presque Isle Audubon has a long and successful history of advocacy, education and community involvement. To build upon the foundation crafted by our early members, PIA continues to look for ways to improve the strength of the organization, grow membership and evolve our practices and procedures to ensure the success of the organization now and in the future.

[1] *[Note: If you look at the IBA map at Audubon PA (and National), the dot for Tionesta Scenic and Research Natural Area is located in Crawford County. However, it is actually in parts of Warren and McKean Counties. The dot is misplaced.]

Five Year Goals

Our goals are set to provide specific measurable objectives that can be accomplished between 2015 and 2020. These goals do not represent every activity, event, or need to which we will devote energy and resources, but instead serve as a list of understandable, measurable, and achievable priorities which should be addressed and prioritized by the organization. All of the goals fall within our three main strategies:

- A SAVING IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS & SIGNIFICANT HABITAT
- B CREATING BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY
- C PIA ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A SAVING IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS & SIGNIFICANT HABITAT

1. Conserve, or assist in the conservation of, important habitats.
2. Improve and protect the quality of habitat at Gull Point for shorebird species.
3. Better understand our existing sanctuaries in terms of how they may be best utilized by birds and work towards improving those properties.
4. Continue participation in removing invasive plant species at Presque Isle State Park.

B CREATING BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

1. Use the PIA sanctuaries to inform and educate our community.
2. Inform and educate our community regarding birds, birding, habitats, and conservation.
3. Increase the number of field trips.
4. Create and publicize a PIA speakers' bureau.
5. Improve communication via social media.
6. Increase participation in citizen science projects and PIA sponsored activities.
7. Continue and expand existing educational and outreach events (e.g., Festival of the Birds, Raptor Experience)
8. Increase programming for children.
9. Collaborate with like-minded organizations.
10. Promote activities for people from urban environments who have limited exposure to nature.

C) PIA ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Improve the marketing of PIA.
2. Conduct a comprehensive review and revision of the bylaws.
3. Conduct on-going membership surveys.
4. Clarify the organizational structure, responsibilities, and involvement to the membership and community.

5. Increase participation in governance, membership, and committees.
6. Increase diversity of membership.
7. Create a comprehensive transition process for organizational leadership.
8. Create a process for developing and mentoring new leaders.
9. Revamp monthly meetings / programs to increase attendance and/or reach new audiences.
10. Evaluate and adapt existing events to better suit member interests.
11. Increase communication of organizational information (e.g., financial information, decisions, etc...) to the membership.
12. Investigate the potential to have paid positions.

Moving Forward

A plan requires those in leadership to choose to enact it and stay the course. Much work needs to be done to bring resolution to the many objectives, and it is the responsibility of the PIA leadership and membership to work together to save important bird areas and habitats, create bird friendly communities, and improve the organization for future generations. At least once per year the Executive Board, through the leadership of the officers, should release a report, article, or other publication which outlines the work being done towards the goals in this plan.

The following members, friends, and leaders of Presque Isle Audubon have assisted in the development of this plan:

Michele Franz
Janet Price
Mary Birdsong
Bonnie Ginader
Ruth Swaney
Kel McDonald
Sam Stull
Dr. Don Snyder
Jerry McWilliams
Drew Mortensen