Strategic Plan 2026–2029

INSPIRE. ACT. PROTECT.



GOLDEN GATE BIRD ALLIANCE



Our Vision

A world where birds, wildlife, and all people flourish together.

Our Mission

To inspire people to protect Bay Area birds and our shared natural environment.





Our Commitment

For more than a century, Golden Gate Bird Alliance has connected people with birds and their habitat. This plan builds on that legacy while focusing on three main pillars: turning inspiration into action, concentrating our conservation work where it can make the greatest difference, and building organizational capacity.

Across all of our work, we are committed to making birding and conservation more accessible, welcoming, and representative of the full diversity of the Bay Area.

(Cover) American Avocet, Heron's Head Park. (Above from top) Brown Pelicans, San Francisco Bay; Wilson's Warbler, Presidio of San Francisco; Meeker Slough shoreline cleanup before Osprey nesting season.

William Lee; Diane Winkler; Andreas Haugstrup Pedersen; Cathy Bleier



A Letter from the Executive Director

Birds have a way of making us notice what's around us. Maybe it's a sudden flash of color in the trees or a song drifting through a shaded canyon. For a moment, we stop and pay attention. That simple sense of wonder can be the beginning of something deeper.

Golden Gate Bird Alliance was founded on the belief that people who care about birds can change their future. For more than a century, our community has spoken up when birds and the places they depend on were threatened.

Today, that work is more urgent than ever. Birds face accelerating habitat loss, climate change, collisions, and other threats. At the same time, public interest in birds is growing. We have the opportunity to leverage that interest into meaningful conservation action.

This Strategic Plan sets out how we will do that over the next three years. We will create clearer pathways from inspiration to action. We will focus our conservation work on the habitats, species, and threats where we can make the greatest measurable difference. And we will strengthen the staff, systems, partnerships, and financial foundation needed to sustain our impact.

None of this work happens alone. It depends on members, volunteers, donors, program participants, community partners, staff, and board members acting together. This collective commitment is our greatest strength.

I invite you to join us by noticing the birds around you, learning their stories, restoring the places they need, speaking up for their protection, and welcoming others to this alliance.

Together we can ensure birds and people flourish across the Bay Area for generations to come.

Glenn Phillips
Executive Director



Allen's Hummingbird.
Robert Ho

GOAL 1

Move People from Inspiration to Conservation Action



Birds have a way of bringing people joy and helping us feel more connected to the world. Our goal is to help turn that feeling into something people can do. We want the next step to be straightforward. Whether that means joining a restoration event, sharing observations through community science, speaking up for bird-friendly policies, becoming a member, or stepping into a volunteer leadership role; together, we can build a community where caring about birds naturally leads to caring for them.

Strategies

1. **Track the journey from inspiration to action.**
   By better understanding participation across our programs, we intend to learn which experiences and invitations lead to sustained conservation action.

2. **Integrate conservation into every program.**
   Field trips, classes, youth education, speaker events, and other public programs will connect the joy of birds with the challenges they face and offer practical opportunities to help.

3. **Create clear engagement pathways.**
   We will design visible next steps that help participants move from learning and appreciation into community science, restoration, advocacy, and leadership.

4. **Develop diverse volunteer leaders.**
   Mentorship, training, and barrier-reducing support will help more people become field trip leaders, educators, advocates, restoration organizers, and community ambassadors.

5. **Strengthen the value of membership.**
   We will effectively communicate how membership powers conservation results and connects people to a community working together for birds.

By 2029

More people will take repeated conservation actions, move into leadership, and see a clear connection between their participation and real outcomes for birds and habitat.



(From top) Burrowing Owl; Volunteers removing weeds and Eucalyptus debris from around native plants on the eastside of North Lake in Golden Gate Park.

Allen Hirsch; Janet Carpinelli

GOAL 2

Focus Our Work for Measurable Conservation Impact



The threats facing birds are extensive, while our resources are limited. We will concentrate our conservation work where we can deliver visible, durable results. That means setting priorities, strengthening partnerships, documenting conservation wins as a result of our collective action, and aligning advocacy, restoration, and community science.

Strategies

1. **Strengthen advocacy planning and coordination.**
   We will establish clear annual priorities, coordinate staff and volunteer committees, mobilize members around timely actions, and track results.

2. **Prioritize high-need habitats and species.**
   We will use conservation need, potential impact, community value, partnerships, and organizational capacity to guide where we invest our time and resources.

3. **Address key threats strategically.**
   We will focus on a limited number of high-leverage threats, such as habitat loss, climate impacts, and bird-building collisions. We will work with partners whenever collaboration can increase impact.

4. **Measure and communicate outcomes.**
   Better documentation, reporting, and public impact summaries will help us evaluate progress and tell the story of what our community accomplishes.

5. **Champion public investment.**
   We will build our ability to support and, when appropriate, help lead efforts that secure lasting public funding for habitat restoration, climate resilience, stewardship, and wildlife protection.

By 2029

Most GGBA conservation resources will be aligned with clearly identified priorities, and gains in habitat protection, policy, threat reduction, restoration, or species benefit will be measured each year.



(From top) Juvenile Red-tailed Hawk, Wildcat Canyon, East Bay Regional Park; Volunteers removing invasive Field Mustard, Datricia, and Algerian Sea Lavender from Arrowhead Marsh in Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline.

Tara McIntyre; Janet Carpinelli

GOAL 3

Build the Capacity to Sustain and Scale Our Impact



Ambitious goals require a strong and resilient organization. We will invest in the people, revenue, systems, governance, and coordination needed to support excellent programs without overextending staff or volunteers. Stronger internal capacity will allow us to make better decisions, respond to opportunities, and sustain results over time.

Strategies

1. **Diversify and stabilize revenue.**
   We will seek support from a healthy mix of individuals, foundations, public agencies, programs, events, and mission-aligned partners to strengthen unrestricted funding and reserves.

2. **Build a sustainable model for GGBA's education and travel programs.**
   A business plan will evaluate program quality, access, pricing, revenue, expenses, staff time, and volunteer capacity, and guide future decisions about dedicated program leadership.

3. **Improve coordination, governance, and systems.**
   We will clarify roles among staff, board, and committees; reduce silos; improve data and communications systems; and connect annual work plans directly to this strategy.

By 2029

GGBA will have a more balanced revenue base, clearer governance and decision-making, sustainable staffing and workloads, and reliable systems for measuring engagement, conservation, fundraising, and organizational health.



A Stronger Alliance

Capacity is not separate from our mission. Every improvement in fundraising, coordination, staffing, technology, or governance gives our community more power to protect birds and the places they need.

(From top) Great Egrets and Great Blue Heron, Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge; Birding at Arrowhead Marsh in Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline.
Don Dvorak; Janet Carpinelli

The People Behind the Plan

This Strategic Plan was shaped through a collaborative process involving board members, staff, volunteers, members, partners, and other stakeholders who shared their experience, aspirations, and ideas for Golden Gate Bird Alliance's future.

Clayton Anderson
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Glenn Phillips
Daniel Scali
Jeni Schmedding
Eric Schroeder
Laurie Sample
Christina Tarr
Mary Wand

David Robinson, Facilitator
Judy Schwartz and Lonnie Zwerin, Non-Profit Consulting Group







(Clockwise from top) Volunteer preparing to plant Grindelia at Lash Lighter Cove; Clark's Grebe, Alameda County; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.
Darwin Mayhew; Joe Galkowsi; Gail West







(Clockwise from top) Field trip; Young birder at Berkeley Bird Festival; Oak Titmouse, Los Altos.
Xiao Wan; Ryan Nakano; Steve Zamek

Our Theory of Change

People protect what they love. Golden Gate Bird Alliance helps people experience the joy of birds and understand the threats they face. We then make meaningful action visible, achievable, and collective.

Inspire. Act. Protect.

Field trips, classes, youth programs, and community science opportunities deepen people's connection to birds. Restoration and advocacy provide practical ways to act. Leadership development and community organizing build the collective power needed to change policies, practices, and systems.

This pathway is strongest when everyone can participate. By reducing barriers and developing leaders who reflect the Bay Area, we build a broader and more sustainable constituency for conservation.

Inspire. Act. Protect.

Together for Bay Area birds.



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GGBA field trip at Sobrante Ridge Regional Park.
Xiao Wen

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