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Bay Area Could Lose Favorite Birds Due to Climate Change

The Bay Area could lose some of its most beloved local birds in coming decades due to climate change, according to a detailed [new report](#) released today by the National Audubon Society.

Common backyard species such as Dark-eyed Juncos, White-crowned Sparrows, and California Towhees are expected to decline locally if temperatures rise by 5.4 degrees, the increase predicted by 2080 if nothing is done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Among other Bay Area species at risk are California Quail (the state bird of California), Allen's Hummingbird, Acorn and Nuttall's Woodpeckers, Western Bluebird, Bushtit, and certain water birds like Goldeneye and Clark's Grebe.

They are among **47 percent of California bird species** found to be at risk from climate change.

The National Audubon report – which studied 604 North American bird species using 140 million bird records – is the most detailed study to date of how climate change will affect birds, both nationally and on a very local level.

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Along with the report, NAS rolled out an online Climate Change Visualizer tool (<https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees/visualizer>) that will allow people to view the expected impact of climate change on birds in their county and even their neighborhood.

“What’s shocking is that the birds at risk are not just rare or endangered species, but common backyard and neighborhood birds such as Dark-eyed Juncos,” said Pam Young, Executive Director of Golden Gate Audubon Society. “Like canaries in a coal mine, these birds are a warning of how climate change threatens all of our communities, lives, and health.”

The National Audubon report concluded that 47 percent of California’s 381 bird species are vulnerable due to climate-related changes in temperature, drought, wildfires, and sea level rise. Some of those species will move out of their current range or out of California altogether in search of more suitable habitat; if they can’t find sufficient food and nesting space, they could go extinct.

But the report also noted that many of those species can be saved if we limit the average temperature rise to 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit rather than 5.4 degrees.

“Two-thirds of America’s birds are threatened with extinction from climate change, but keeping global temperatures down will help up to 76 percent of them,” said David Yarnold, National Audubon CEO. “There’s hope in this report, but first, it’ll break your heart if you care about birds and what they tell us about the ecosystems we share with them. It’s a bird emergency.”

Audubon’s report is based on the 2014 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report models for various levels of global warming. It includes steps that everyone can take to reduce the harm to birds and people from climate change.

The full national Audubon report – including the Climate Visualizer tool to see impacts on birds in your local area – is available at <https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees>.

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Golden Gate Audubon Executive Director Pam Young is available for media interviews. We can also provide photos of some of the at-risk local bird species. Contact Communications Director Ilana DeBare at (510) 301-5573 or idebare@goldengateaudubon.org

National Audubon scientists who worked on the report are also available for interviews.