

The Joy of Sandhill Crane Season

There's hurricane season, cherry season, and basketball season. Aurora Fowler's hometown has crane season. "That's when the cranes stop on the Platte River in Nebraska for four to six weeks in the spring," says the Gibbon, Nebraska, middle-school student. Half a million of the three-foot tall birds stop to feed on farm field leftovers on their way northward to nesting grounds in Canada, Alaska, and Siberia. "People come here from all over the world to see the largest gathering of sandhill cranes on Earth," says Aurora. Crane watchers who stop at the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary on the Platte River are likely to see Aurora. She volunteers at the center doing everything from cleaning to guiding trips to view the cranes. "It's about more than just volunteering my time," says Aurora. "It is about sharing my enthusiasm for these birds and this river."

Connect to the Crane Cam: rowe.audubon.org/crane-cam



Aurora Fowler

"Three Green Things"

Small changes can add up to big results. Just ask any of the 6,350 students in Montgomery County, Maryland, who participated in the GreenKids program through the Audubon Naturalist Society. Hundreds of classrooms learned about saving energy, then chose three green actions to help. Ten-year-old Oraine Malcolm's fifth-grade class saved energy by turning off lights when leaving the classroom, unplugging electronic equipment when it was not being used, and recycling. Each classroom kept track of its progress by dropping a penny in a jar for each "Three Green Things" action. The schools collected 21,815 pennies that went to Pennies for the Planet! Oraine says everyone can make a difference by sharing ways to help the environment with friends and family. "Those people will then make others aware and soon the world will be aware of the environment and how they can make a difference, too."



Oraine Malcolm

BUILDING BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES AND A GREENER WORLD

Across the nation, young people are putting their dedication and skills to work as environmental stewards.

➔ **Join in!**

TRY THIS!



Recruit Friends: Project too big for just you? Ask friends to pitch in and make it fun.

Stop Bird Collisions: String old CDs or DVDs together and hang in front of windows to stop birds from hitting the glass.



Join Forces: Start a Junior Environmentalist Club at school, or join a "friends of the park" club or local Audubon group.

Stay Connected: Keep up with your favorites through a Facebook causes page. facebook.com/causes



Get Inspired: Watch videos on Audubon's YouTube Channel. youtube.com/user/NationalAudubon

Eagles Build Towers for Chimney Swifts

Eagles are building homes for chimney swifts in Minneapolis. Not eagle birds, but Eagle Scouts. Boy Scout troops have been helping Audubon Minnesota's Chimney Swift Conservation Project build nesting towers. Centuries ago, chimney swifts nested inside hollow trees. When settlers cut down forests, swifts moved into chimneys. But these days, open-topped chimneys are becoming rare, so swifts have lost many nest sites. The Minnesota population of swifts has dropped 50% since the 1970s. The hope is that installing 12-foot-tall wooden towers for the birds to nest in will help them recover. Scout Troop 100 has constructed 10 chimney swift towers. High school student Chaoching Vang of Maplewood, Minnesota, earned the top Eagle rank in scouting through this community service project. "It creates awareness about the decline of the chimney swifts," explains Chaoching. "Action speaks louder than words. Get involved," says the 17-year-old Eagle Scout.

Connect to videos and info on chimney swift towers: chimneyswifts.org



Chaoching Vang (fourth from left), other Scouts, and an advisor



Nora Jade Flower

Patrolling Beaches for the Birds

Florida's beaches are popular places for surfers, swimmers, sunbathers—and nesting shorebirds. Plovers, terns, skimmers, oystercatchers, and other coastal birds lay their sand-colored eggs in shallow depressions on the beach. Unfortunately the nests, eggs, and chicks are easily harmed by beachgoers and their pets. So each spring when nesting begins, bird stewards step in to help. "We protect the beach-nesting birds from human disturbances," says 14-year-old Nora Jade Flower of St. Petersburg, Florida. Bird stewards rope off nesting areas, post signs, and ask people to give the birds space. "Some people don't listen," says Nora Jade, who has been protecting birds since age 7. "But many just don't know that they are doing something harmful when they chase the birds or get too close to the nests." Nora Jade wants us all to safely share the shore with birds.

Take-Action Tips



Start Small: Choose a single green thing to do and stick to it.



Inspire with Art: Use art, theater, video, or music to make your point.



Ask an Expert: Learn all you can about the problem from a knowledgeable adult.



Find Your Passion: Get motivated by what matters most to you.



Use Your Talent: Put your unique skills to work to make our planet a better place.



Be Determined: Learn from mistakes, problem-solve, and move forward.



See the Problem, Make a Plan: Identify the exact issue and figure out how to help.