



National Audubon Society

Vice President and Executive Director, Connecticut & New York

The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow. Throughout the Americas, Audubon uses science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation to achieve its vision—for a world in which both people and wildlife thrive.

THE ORGANIZATION

The National Audubon Society is one of the oldest and most influential conservation organizations in the United States. Since 1905, a passion for birds and nature has been the driving force behind Audubon's legacy. The organization has played a critical role in some of the most significant victories for birds and the environment, including the establishment of the first National Wildlife Refuges; the banning of DDT in 1972; landmark legislation like the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts; and the establishment of the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Audubon advocates broadly for conservation through science, policy, education, and on-the-ground conservation action.

Today's Audubon is tackling the most pressing conservation challenges of our time.

Audubon is a powerful distributed network with an unparalleled reach that includes over 1.8 million members, over 500 local and campus chapters, 22 field offices, and 34 nature centers. In addition, Audubon works with dozens of international partners throughout the Western Hemisphere to support the protection of migratory birds and the habitats they need to thrive, today and in the future.

The National Audubon Society is a \$135M and 700+ employee organization. Since becoming Audubon's Chief Executive Officer in 2010, David Yarnold has led the organization with the singular focus of creating the most effective conservation network in the United States. A 2017 Harvard Business School case study for non-profit excellence described the transformation of Audubon under Yarnold's vision as, "The most impressive turnaround of a legacy organization we've ever seen." In the past decade, the organization has pivoted from its early emphasis on community-based nature education to pursue bird-focused conservation with robust policy and conservation strategies with greater alignment across its distributed network. To achieve lasting change at scale, it has reestablished national programming and policy influence; strengthened and invested in state-level leadership; invigorated relationships with and service to its expansive chapter network; pursued efficiencies; and significantly strengthened communications, fundraising, marketing, and technology capabilities. Over this period, Audubon's budget has doubled.

As a result of its reinvention, Audubon has become a sought-after partner for its bipartisan, grassroots network, the quality of its science, and solution-oriented approach to conservation. The Audubon team focuses on the causes of climate change, ensuring resilient lands and waters and advancing bedrock protections of birds and the places they, and we, all need to thrive. The organization's last strategic plan further focuses on five strategic priorities: coasts, working lands, water, bird-friendly communities, and climate. This allows for the most effective collaboration and coordination of its conservation efforts across the flyways and hemisphere.

An [active pursuit](#) of racial equity is a moral and strategic imperative for Audubon. We are committed to becoming a workplace in which every employee feels valued, seen, and heard, and in which everyone has the opportunity to grow, thrive, and live their values. We know that a more diverse Audubon allows us to be more equitable and inclusive in how and where we work.



SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE OVERVIEW

The National Audubon Society (NAS or Audubon) seeks a dynamic, entrepreneurial, and strategic Executive Director to lead our Connecticut/New York office. The Executive Director will lead a talented team to advance overall conservation objectives, strengthen and mobilize our bipartisan network, and deliver durable policy solutions across the two states. The Executive Director will also serve as a Vice President of the National Audubon Society and will work with their peers across the country to shape and deliver national objectives, initiatives, and processes.

The incoming Vice President and Executive Director will bring demonstrated experience successfully leading an organization or unit that is similar in its complexity, programs and services, and funding structure to Audubon Connecticut and New York. Demonstrated success in implementing innovative conservation, policy, engagement, and development strategies is preferred. Building on the success of our well-respected conservation programs in Connecticut and New York, they must inspire collaboration among our conservation, legislative, and philanthropic partners to deepen our impact and leadership across the region and inspire decision-makers, partners, and the philanthropic community to invest in Audubon's conservation vision and strategic plan. Additionally, the ED/VP for Connecticut and New York will oversee a \$6.8 million budget, a team of 47 staff, and 7 Audubon Centers and 3 Sanctuaries, while mobilizing the power of the 32 affiliated Audubon Chapters and over 130,000 grassroots members to protect birds and their habitats.

This is a leadership position with the potential to grow National Audubon Society's reach and effect change at the local, regional, and national levels. The Vice President and Executive Director will report to Audubon's Vice President for the Atlantic Flyway.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Strategic Leadership and Organizational Management:

- Build a vision for the region that increases our conservation impact, distinguishes Audubon Connecticut and New York's leadership from peer organizations in the region, leverages our current strengths, inspires donor investment and engagement of a bipartisan network, and reflects National Audubon's strategic priorities.
- Deliver strategic and operational excellence through the leadership, management, and mentoring of a mature and diverse staff.
- Serve as a leader in infusing organizational decisions, policies, and programs with the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Focus resources on the most critical, high-leverage projects and strategies, including policy development and public engagement.
- Leverage the impact of Audubon centers to achieve state, regional, and national conservation and organizational goals.
- Build upon the strong foundation of programs and initiatives that are resonant and relevant for the region's diverse population.
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the office, including setting financial and programmatic goals and analyzing results in collaboration with national and local staff.
- Ensure that all Audubon financial standards, operating policies, programmatic commitment, and legal/statutory requirements are met.

Conservation Strategic Execution:

- Achieve strategic goals and initiatives, that are integrated with National Audubon's conservation, network, and philanthropic priorities.
- Increase our region-wide capacity to achieve the conservation of priority birds and their habitats. Priorities include:



- Protecting the iconic waters and coastal habitats of the Long Island Sound area for the benefit of birds and people.
- Promoting bird-friendly forest management to reverse declines of forest bird species.
- Enhancing carbon and water storage through our healthy forest program, which targets conservation efforts on both public and private lands.
- Inspiring our bipartisan network and decision-makers throughout the region to mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- Creating durable policy solutions at the local, state, and federal levels that address the most critical threats to birds.
- Building sustainable conservation strategies and resonant education programs that engage the diversity of communities throughout the Connecticut and New York region.
- Crafting and executing conservation, policy, and engagement strategies and programming at our ten regional Audubon centers that advance Audubon's local, state, and federal conservation priorities.

Fundraising and External Relations:

- Partner closely with National Audubon's development team to cultivate existing and solicit new major donors, foundations, corporations, and government agencies to significantly increase contributions.
- Represent Audubon Connecticut and New York throughout the region to raise the profile and visibility of our priorities and impact with funders, partners, policy makers, and the public, resulting in deeper donor investment.
- Strengthen the financially sustainable business and development plans for the region, with a focus on expanding new funding sources, inspiring new donors, and cultivating strategic partnerships with agencies and other NGOs.
- Support fundraising for national priority projects with Audubon's leadership and development teams. Collaborate meaningfully with other Audubon state programs and national development staff on donor strategies.

Stakeholder Relations:

- Engage and build the Audubon Connecticut and New York Advisory Boards to inspire their advocacy for conservation and programmatic priorities, individual philanthropy, and fundraising support.
- Support chapters in the region to extend Audubon's capacity for on-the-ground conservation, policy change, and education at scale.
- Prioritize engagement and activation of the region's diverse communities in the Audubon movement, including college chapters, chapter leadership, advisory boards, volunteers, and conservation partners.
- Work with relevant governmental departments and non-governmental organizations to promote and prioritize bird science and habitat conservation.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Experience:

- Experience in conservation, environmental policy and advocacy, and/or similar fields; knowledge of how conservation work is advanced in the region and knowledge of key conservation leaders and partners is strongly preferred.
- Demonstrated experience leading the execution of complex projects through to success, including meeting financial goals, project deadlines, and coordinating the work of key staff and partners, in organizations of similar or greater size.
- Demonstrated success in fundraising; experience with major donors, foundations, corporations, and government funders.



- Experience in public policy development and advocacy, campaigns, lobbying, and/or working with state legislatures and members of Congress and Executive Branch leaders is ideal.
- Demonstrated commitment to creating an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment; ability to build and lead a diverse team of staff, board members, and supporters.

Skills:

- Strong leadership skills with an entrepreneurial spirit, solid business acumen, and management operations skills; demonstrated ability to inspire and motivate staff, volunteers, donors, and potential partners is a must.
- Demonstrated ability to succeed in a distributed network and a highly matrixed, complex organization; the ability to manage up, down, and sideways effectively, as well as capacity to influence and persuade,
- Outstanding interpersonal skills, judgment, and a demonstrated ability to collaborate and build coalitions with a wide range of individuals and organizations at the local, regional, and national levels.
- Excellent and persuasive communication skills, both written and verbal, including public speaking experience, and the ability to effectively represent Audubon to its members, state and federal elected officials, donors, and chapter leaders as well as in traditional, social, and digital media.

Personal Knowledge & Characteristics:

- Experience with and understanding of the role of science in developing conservation strategies; knowledge of the conservation landscape in the two states is preferred.
- Understanding of the region's conservation and political landscape and existing connections to policymakers and the regional conservation advocacy community is preferred.
- Knowledge of funders and donors engaged in conservation philanthropy in the region is preferred.
- Willingness and ability to travel routinely through the region and nationally, as required.
- A strong and demonstrated commitment to the mission, values, and programs of the National Audubon Society, including the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree required; graduate degree strongly preferred.
- 10+ years' experience in organizational leadership, preferably connected to conservation or civic engagement, including 3+ years as an enterprise executive/manager with accountability over multiple programs and/or regions.

APPLICATIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND INQUIRIES

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including resumes and brief letters of interest) should be sent electronically to the Isaacson, Miller executive search team:

Chloe Kanas and Tatiana Oberkoetter

Isaacson, Miller

www.imsearch.com/7786

*The National Audubon Society is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination, inclusion, and equal opportunity.
We actively seek a diverse pool of candidates in this search.*