



CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
LOCATION — FLEXIBLE



Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with National Audubon Society in the search for a Chief Development Officer.

The Chief Development Officer will shape the narrative, architecture, and practice of Audubon's development plan, and directly impact Audubon's ability to conserve birds and habitats across the Americas. The Chief Development Officer will be an outstanding communicator who is at ease in a front-facing role, with the stature and credibility to cultivate and maintain senior-level relationships across a variety of stakeholders including individual donors, foundations, corporations, investors, and partner organizations. The Chief Development Officer will work closely with the Chief Executive Officer, the Board of Directors, and with members of senior management and development teams, establishing strong and collaborative working relationships across the organization. Building upon the success of Audubon's *Elevate* campaign, which transformed its organizational culture of philanthropy and has served as an outstanding springboard for future fundraising, the Chief Development Officer will play a pivotal role in shaping Audubon's future and in advancing field conservation at a time when there is enormous need.

The National Audubon Society is a nonprofit conservation organization that protects birds and the places they need today and tomorrow. It works throughout the Americas towards a future where birds thrive because Audubon is a powerful, diverse, and ever-growing force for conservation. Audubon has more than 700 staff working across the hemisphere and more than 1.5 million active supporters.

North America has lost three billion birds since 1970, and more than 500 bird species are at risk of extinction across Latin America and the Caribbean. Birds act as early warning systems about the health of the environment, and they are telling us that birds—and the planet—are in crisis. Together as one Audubon, the organization is working to alter the course of climate change and habitat loss, leading to healthier bird populations, and reversing current trends in biodiversity loss. It does this by implementing on-the-ground conservation, partnering with local communities, influencing public and corporate policy, and building community.

Audubon is committed to a culture of workplace excellence, where its talented and diverse staff are deeply engaged with a strong sense of belonging. The birds Audubon pledges to protect differ in color, size, behavior, geographical preference, and countless other ways. By honoring and celebrating the equally remarkable diversity of the human species, Audubon brings new creativity, effectiveness, and leadership to its work throughout the hemisphere.

FLIGHT PLAN: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 – 2028

National Audubon Society has grown and evolved throughout its long and storied history. As it launches its new [Strategic Plan](#), it once again asks the question: *How can Audubon best meet this urgent moment for birds and the planet?*

The answer can only be derived from a deep understanding of the challenges the organization faces, its existing and historic strengths, opportunities for growth, and its unique position within the conservation field. Recent strategic plans have oriented the organization around flyways; expanded its reach into Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean; and built capacity and expertise in key areas like climate, habitat conservation, policy, and community building. These plans have laid the groundwork for *Flight Plan*, which will enable Audubon to scale its work like never before. *Flight Plan* positions the organization to maximize its impact at this critical moment for birds and the planet.

For more than a century, Audubon has demonstrated strength, adaptability, and resilience through periods of change. *Flight Plan* represents a new era that builds on the strengths and lessons from Audubon's past.

Fight Plan addresses the greatest threats to birds and orients the organization towards impact through

- a measurable Guiding Star to unify the organization in a common direction;
- shared conservation milestones that will drive impact through contributions from the entire Audubon community;
- collaborative co-creation of the plan involving broad and deep staff, Chapter, and Board engagement;
- incorporating conservation and culture in one plan and acknowledging the need to build internal strengths to achieve the desired impact; and
- Audubon's first-ever set of organizational values, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging conservation principles, and behaviors that bring its values to life.

This is a turning point for the planet and National Audubon Society, and the organization is ready to meet this challenge. *Flight Plan* positions Audubon to achieve meaningful and lasting impact—protecting birds, people, and the planet.

Flight Plan elevates three strategic drivers—forces that impact its strategy—throughout all aspects of the plan.

A Hemispheric Approach to Bird Conservation directs Audubon's work to the places where birds need it the most. Audubon recognizes that most bird species in the Americas migrate annually between Canada, the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Audubon's programs will be unencumbered by political boundaries and seamlessly integrated across the Western Hemisphere.

Climate Change poses fundamental challenges to traditional conservation approaches. The impacts of climate change directly threaten two-thirds of bird species and exacerbate other key threats. Audubon will consider how climate change will continue to impact everything it does.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging is fundamental to Audubon's organizational culture and how it partners. It will build a more equitable future where engaging across differences is embraced and celebrated. Audubon can be a leader in this space, forging a community that looks like the Americas—with the collective strength to change things for the better.

With the support of its staff, Chapters, Board, and members, National Audubon Society is positioned to inspire, influence, innovate, and achieve results at unprecedented scale.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Chief Development Officer will report to the Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Elizabeth Gray and will serve on the organization's Executive Team. The Chief Development Officer will oversee a team of 80 including major, principal, institutional, and planned giving; research; development communications; direct response; and events staff.

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Thank you for your interest in this esteemed organization. For more than a century, National Audubon Society has demonstrated strength, adaptability, and resilience through periods of change. I am honored to be Audubon's first women CEO—leading our flock of supporters, volunteers, donors, and staff into a new era amidst a complex and ever-changing landscape. Our work is defined by results and cultural progress in a time of unprecedented urgency created by biodiversity loss and climate change.

These dual crises are leading us to the brink of catastrophic change. Yet, there is a window of opportunity to have a meaningful impact, and our commitment to doing so is unwavering. With a new strategic plan in hand—our Flight Plan, we are answering the question: “How can Audubon best meet this urgent moment for birds, people and the planet?” The answer comes from a deep understanding of the challenges we face, our existing and historic strengths, opportunities for growth, and our unique position within the conservation field.

Audubon's work has never been more needed or more relevant. And that is where you come in. I need a development partner who, like me, embraces the challenges we face with confidence and determination to succeed. Our goal is to bend the bird curve, which means halting, and ultimately reversing, the steep decline of birds across the Americas. We have a solid plan, a compelling story—now we need the funds to succeed.

Our previous Chief Development Officer left the organization on a high note after closing a \$650 million campaign on time and with \$826 million. I am looking for an ambitious leader and strategic partner to strengthen the fundraising team and ready the organization for the next big challenge—a billion-dollar funding initiative to support Audubon's Flight Plan.

If you are looking for a CEO who loves relationship building and is fearless in asking for big, bold, or complex gifts, then I hope you will consider joining me. Unlike many other CEOs, I enjoy fundraising—I am a fundraiser! I have secured a nine-figure gift and many multimillion-dollar gifts. Fundraising for the future of birds and the organization is my number one priority. With a common vision, mutual trust, shared understanding, and strong communication, we will be an impressive team that builds a world-class fundraising operation.

I invite you to join me as we take flight—to fully engage our loyal and long-time donors, inspire the development team, and attract new philanthropic investment to create a world where birds, people, and the planet thrive. Are you ready to join me?

— Dr. Elizabeth Gray, Chief Executive Officer

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY'S COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

National Audubon Society is a place where talented and diverse staff are deeply engaged, with a strong sense of belonging, and are supported in their professional growth. Audubon has made equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging a strategic imperative. Protecting and conserving nature and the environment transcends political, cultural, and social boundaries. Respect, inclusion, and opportunity for people of all backgrounds, lifestyles, and perspectives attract the best ideas and harness the greatest passion to shape a healthier, more vibrant future for all who share the planet.

Audubon is committed to increasing the diversity of its staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, members, and supporters, and fostering an inclusive network of Audubon Centers and Chapters in all communities, from rural to urban. It respects the individuality of each member of the community, and it is committed to a workplace free of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, national or ethnic origin, politics, or veteran status.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Development Officer will

- analyze Audubon's national fundraising potential while designing and implementing a development plan to support the growth of the network;
- develop and maintain strong, collaborative working relationships with Audubon's distributed network and, together, work on the identification and implementation of innovative, mutually beneficial fundraising efforts;
- articulate a clear and compelling case for support and craft a communication strategy that will inspire and motivate constituencies to achieve ambitious revenue generation goals;
- guide, manage, and actively participate in efforts to identify, cultivate, and solicit sources of funds and gifts, including major gifts, foundation and corporate grants, and planned gifts;
- work closely with the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Directors to build a powerful and resourceful national Audubon Board of Directors;
- together with the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Directors, put in place a strategy for the implementation of a significant capital campaign;
- as part of Audubon's Executive Team, implement Audubon's strategic plan, *Flight Plan*, and set priorities for the organization;
- recruit, train, and develop staff, creating a dynamic, supportive, and effective development team that is impactful with donors across the Audubon network; and
- institute a system of accountability and a constructive means of critical evaluation of the effectiveness and success of Audubon's national development activities and programs.

LEADERSHIP

Elizabeth Gray

Chief Executive Officer

Elizabeth Gray joined National Audubon Society in 2021, first as President and Chief Conservation Officer before being appointed as Audubon's first woman Chief Executive Officer. Prior to joining Audubon, she was the Global Managing Director of The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Climate Change program. Trained as an ornithologist, she has spent over 30 years as a dedicated conservationist, spending considerable time in the field nationally and abroad.

Elizabeth has been a leader on equity issues, from founding the first urban conservation program in Washington, D.C., to empowering the next generation of conservation leaders through a young professional's network and youth advocacy program, to serving as one of five members of TNC's Global Gender Equity Council.

Elizabeth is based in Audubon's Washington, D.C. office. She holds a Ph.D. in ecology from the University of Washington and an A.B. with highest honors in psychology from Harvard University.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

National Audubon Society seeks a Chief Development Officer with

- a commitment to the mission of National Audubon Society—to protect birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow
- an inspiring and creative leadership style and an ability to implement a compelling vision for accelerating the growth of private support for the organization across its network;
- an ability to leverage Audubon's structure and strategy to energize supporters around its mission;
- experience creating and implementing fundraising programs for leading nonprofit organizations with defined priorities, complex metrics, and clear accountability;
- an ability to personally secure funds from a wide range of donors with a focus on major and principal gifts;
- exceptional revenue generation experience including experience meeting ambitious revenue goals as well as proposing innovative and sustainable resource-generating ideas;
- the ability, experience, and stature necessary to communicate effectively at all levels within the organization and externally;
- the experience and leadership skills necessary to establish a culture of philanthropy throughout the organization, and to align Audubon's development plan with its strategic plan;
- an ability to work effectively within a networked structure and to develop innovative and creative fundraising plans that integrate national, regional, and state priorities;
- excellent communication and presentation skills and an ability to act as an inspiring communicator who can articulate Audubon's mission in a clear and compelling manner to a broad, diverse audience;
- a demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging;
- an ability to serve as a positive and unifying figure who can lead by example in order to create an integrated development culture across the Audubon network;
- an ability to persuade and influence, build and preserve trust, agreement, confidence, and respect among various stakeholders;
- an ability to work thoughtfully yet decisively within a decentralized organizational structure with multiple internal and external stakeholders;
- experience recruiting, leading, and motivating talented, diverse teams;
- an ability to shape and articulate reporting relationships and network management strategies;
- a flexible, inclusive approach to leadership, which adjusts to different audiences and shares success; and
- drive and integrity—the traits of professionalism, confidence, honesty, and resilience.

National Audubon Society will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. A bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience and at least ten years of experience in fundraising roles of increasing responsibility and leadership is preferred, as is campaign experience.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$300,000 to \$350,000 annually. National Audubon Society offers a comprehensive benefits package.

LOCATION

National Audubon Society has major offices in both Washington, D.C. and New York City. The Chief Executive Officer and most of her direct reports are based in Washington, D.C.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of National Audubon Society as well as the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit: [*Chief Development Officer, National Audubon Society.*](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Gregory Leet, [*gregoryleet@aspenleadershipgroup.com.*](mailto:gregoryleet@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

All inquiries will be held in confidence.