

SEATTLE AUDUBON  
FOR BIRDS AND NATURE



# Volunteer Handbook



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## Welcome from the President

Dear Volunteers of Seattle Audubon,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to this organization that is much loved and respected in our community. Founded by volunteers who had a burning passion for birds and the natural environment, Seattle Audubon continues to operate with valued contribution from volunteers like you. Speaking from my personal experience, volunteering at Seattle Audubon has made me a better citizen and community member, and it has always taught me valuable lessons that I can apply at work, and elsewhere. Many volunteers before us have accomplished amazing things in our 100-year history and I firmly believe that by working closely with staff and the board, our generation of volunteers and those that come after us will continue to carry on this tradition of service, dedication and mission. I hope you enjoy your volunteer experiences here at Seattle Audubon. Thank you, on behalf of the birds, for everything you do.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Wang, President, Board of Directors

## About Seattle Audubon

### *History*

Since 1916, Seattle Audubon members and volunteers have continually worked for the protection, restoration, and preservation of natural habitat for birds and other wildlife. These years of experience have never been more important than today as the growth in our region stresses many habitats and their inhabitants. Seattle Audubon is without peer in the Seattle-area environmental community in the depth and breadth of volunteer involvement and leadership.

Faithful volunteers work hand-in-hand with dedicated staff to provide education programs to children and adults, to engage neighborhoods in citizen science projects, and to protect birds and nature through conservation activities. Field trips give members the opportunity to enjoy birding from waters of Puget Sound to the shrub-steppe of Eastern Washington. Volunteers at the Seattle Audubon Nature Center staff a bird question hotline and sell quality backyard bird supplies and gifts through the Nature Shop.

Seattle Audubon is largely funded through individual donations, memberships, grants, earned income and investment income. We are staffed by a small group of paid employees and a large cadre of volunteers.

### *Mission*

Seattle Audubon cultivates and leads a community that values and protects birds and the natural environment.



### *Vision*

Seattle Audubon envisions a healthy environment in balance with nature, where people enjoy, respect, and care for the natural resources that sustain the community of life.

### *What We Do*

<b>Conservation</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Nature Shop</b>
We work closely with concerned citizens, local decision-makers, and like-minded organizations to promote environmentally sound public policy and private practices that protect habitat for birds and nature.	We provide hands-on opportunities for students, adults, and families to learn about and enjoy birds and the natural environment.	We initiate and manage citizen-science projects to provide a scientific basis for conservation and greater public understanding of bird populations in our region.	The Seattle Audubon Nature Shop is a complete source for bird- and nature-related merchandise, providing essential funding through its profits for the activities and programs of Seattle Audubon.

## Your Role as a Volunteer

This handbook will increase your awareness and knowledge of Seattle Audubon’s Volunteer Program. Please be sure you understand the goals and objectives, activities, emergency procedures, and philosophy, and can articulate them to the public as appropriate.

### *Seattle Audubon Volunteer Vision Statement*

We, the volunteers of Seattle Audubon, choose to put our time, expertise and dedication to use because we care deeply about the community and believe that through our actions, the mission of Seattle Audubon can come to life and make a difference in the world.

### *Expectations of our Volunteers*

**ENJOY YOURSELF!** By showing and communicating your own enthusiasm about Seattle Audubon and its mission, you will have gone a long way toward fulfilling our expectations of you.

**BE AN AMBASSADOR!** Any time you are acting as a Seattle Audubon volunteer, you are representing the organization and our work. Your role as an ambassador is key to connecting us with the community.

**MAINTAIN A GOOD ATTITUDE!** Your attitude and performance are direct reflections on the quality of our organization and the work we do. Courtesy and helpfulness to the public and respect for Seattle Audubon personnel are of the utmost importance.

### *Benefits of Volunteering with SAS:*

- Help Seattle Audubon in its mission of cultivating and leading a community that values and protects birds and the natural environment
- Work with and get to know like-minded people with equally interesting lives and histories
- Learn more about birds and nature and their habitats
- Become more informed about Seattle Audubon activities and environmental issues
- Make a difference in the lives of community members we work with
- Letter of reference available for volunteers with 100 or more hours of service
- Periodic volunteer appreciation activities and events
- A number of tax benefits are available for volunteers under the general charitable contribution deduction of the Internal Revenue Code. For detailed information, please contact the IRS for publication 526 - Charitable Contribution

### **Does your Employer Match Volunteer Hours?**

Employer matching gift programs are an easy way to instantly increase the impact of your gift of volunteer time to Seattle Audubon. Please contact your employer's human resources department to find out if your volunteer hours are matched.

Contact Seattle Audubon's Development Department at (206) 523-8243 x 14 to complete the process.

### *Getting Started*

1. **Fill out a volunteer application.** To become a volunteer, you must fill out a volunteer application and return it to the Volunteer Coordinator. Applications are available in the Nature Shop, online, and from staff members.
2. **Talk with the Volunteer Coordinator.** After the Volunteer Coordinator receives your application, they will contact you to learn more about your interests, skills, and availability.
3. **Get specific information for your project or program.** Once you are matched up with a project or program, the Seattle Audubon staff or representative responsible for that project will contact you. They will let you know if there is any training you will need to participate in or release forms to complete before beginning your participation in the project.
4. **Complete any necessary trainings and forms.**
5. **Begin volunteering.**

### *Your Rights*

As a volunteer you should expect the following from Seattle Audubon:

- Training for the activity you are participating in
- Supervision, where appropriate
- A safe and harassment free environment
- Support from the Volunteer Coordinator and staff in resolving issues
- Recognition for your contribution
- Letter of reference for volunteers with 100 or more hours of service

### *Your Responsibilities*

As a volunteer you will be joining a team of dedicated individuals who make a tremendous difference to our organization, our community, birds, and nature. More details are provided in the policies below but the following responsibilities highlight what we expect from our volunteers:

- Possess an enthusiastic interest in the Seattle Audubon mission of protecting birds and the natural environment
- Act as a goodwill ambassador reflecting the organization’s mission
- Agree to Seattle Audubon’s volunteer policies and procedures outlined below
- Understand what is involved in a volunteer assignment before accepting it, including the time commitment, duties, and responsibilities
- Contact the program manager or activity leader if you cannot meet your commitment to show up or complete a project on time
- Conduct yourself in a professional and courteous manner
- Attend trainings that relate to your volunteer duties
- Respect confidentiality
- View Audubon staff as allies, advisors, and mentors
- Share feedback and ideas with staff from a volunteer perspective
- Participate as a team member
- Be open and honest regarding skills, intentions, and goals
- Be open to leadership opportunities
- Keep emergency and contact information up to date
- If you are unclear of your schedule, responsibilities, tasks, or anything else before or during a volunteer activity, please let us know

## Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Seattle Audubon offers many programs and activities to its members and the public led by either professional staff or volunteers. In its goal to provide an enjoyable experience for all and provide an active model of respect for birds and wildlife while cultivating and leading a community that values and protects birds and the natural environment, it provides these rules of conduct for participants in Seattle Audubon programs and activities.

The following policies and procedures have been established by sound practices and approved by Seattle Audubon Society Board and Staff. If you are unsure about any of these policies and procedures, please talk to the Volunteer Coordinator or your program manager/supervisor.

### *Reporting Time and Attendance*

It is very important to Seattle Audubon that you keep track of your volunteer hours. Volunteers make a significant contribution and we must keep accurate records of all volunteer hours for our grantors and financial records. Please record your hours from “door to door” from when you leave your home to volunteer for Seattle Audubon to when you return.

**How to Submit Hours Worked**  
 Hours are requested at the end of the year, but you may submit them at any time via email: [volunteerc@seattleaudubon.org](mailto:volunteerc@seattleaudubon.org) or by calling 206-523-8243 and asking for the Volunteer Coordinator.

### *Lateness and Absences*

Our expectation is that you are punctual and that you can stay for your entire scheduled activity. Please make every effort to reach your staff supervisor or project organizer before the start of your scheduled activity if you will be late or can no longer make it. Please do not find a replacement for your scheduled activity without contacting the program manager first.

### *Keeping your volunteer status active*

To be considered an active Seattle Audubon volunteer, you must have:

- 1) Completed a volunteer application
- 2) Received this handbook from a Seattle Audubon staff member
- 3) Volunteered **and** reported hours at some point in the previous two years

### *Resigning from your volunteer position*

Volunteers are not required to give a reason for their departure. However, a two-week notice is recommended and greatly appreciated.

### *Parking at Seattle Audubon*

If you plan to be in the Seattle Audubon office or Nature Shop for more than an hour, please try and park on the side streets or further back in the parking lot. Please leave the spaces on 82nd St. to the east side of the alley open for our neighbors and their guests.

### *Background Checks*

Seattle Audubon strives to ensure a safe working environment for its staff, volunteers, and students. In support of these efforts, SAS requires background checks to be completed for some of our volunteer positions, such as those involving minors, confidential information, and/or finances. Background checks will be conducted in compliance with federal and state law. Information obtained through a background check will be maintained in strict confidence.

**Do you need a  
Background Check?**  
When you volunteer for an activity, SAS will let you know during your project training if a background check is needed.

### *Privacy Policy*

#### **Your Contact Information**

Seattle Audubon respects the privacy of our members and volunteers. The organization does not sell, trade, or share personal information, nor does Seattle Audubon send any solicitations on behalf of other organizations, unless the individual has given us specific permission to do so.

We will use your contact information to send you volunteer opportunities and information about Seattle Audubon projects, programs, and activities.

#### **Photographs**

Photos are often taken at Seattle Audubon events. Your image will not be used by SAS without your permission.

#### **Communication**

We strive to keep all our volunteers updated and reminded of upcoming schedules and projects. We will do our best to communicate with you ASAP if there are changes in your volunteer activity. The best way to make sure that we can get in touch with you is to make sure you provide SAS with your current contact information and keep it updated if it changes.

On the rare occasion that an emergency occurs, such as a power outage or major unexpected health issue, we may not be able to reach you before your scheduled activity starts. If you have a

#### **Communication Best Practices**

- Keep your information updated with main SAS.
- In case of emergency, first call 911, if necessary. Next, call the SAS number: **206-523-8243**.
- If you need to communicate with the project lead about your participation, use the contact information they have provided you. If you cannot reach them, try the main SAS number.



question about the activity, please contact the project lead. If you cannot reach the person in charge of your activity, please call the main Seattle Audubon number: **206-523-8243**.

### *Cell Phone Usage*

As practicable as possible, personal phone calls and emails should be avoided until the end of a volunteer's committed time.

### *Minors (under 18) as Volunteers*

Volunteers who have not reached 18 years of age must have a signed minor consent form prior to volunteering. On many projects, youth under 16 must be chaperoned by a parent or guardian. The volunteer assignment for a minor must be in a non-hazardous environment that complies with all appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

### *Dress Code*

Seattle Audubon expects that all volunteers will dress appropriately and present themselves in a professional, well-groomed manner at all times.

#### **What to Wear**

Practicality should guide your decision on what to wear. If you will be working outdoors, it's a good idea to dress in layers and be prepared for the elements.

### *Fragrance Free Policy*

To accommodate people who are medically sensitive to the chemicals in fragrant products, Seattle Audubon requests that you refrain from wearing fragrances and other scented products that are perceptible to others while volunteering. If scent becomes an issue, a supervisor may ask a volunteer to leave the premises and correct the problem. Any volunteer with a concern about scents or odors should contact the Volunteer Coordinator or the manager of his/her activity or program.

### *Seattle Audubon Nondiscrimination Statement*

Seattle Audubon recognizes that the future strength of our community rests firmly on the organization's commitment to engage, value, and respect richness of a diverse citizenry. SAS seeks to enhance the quality of life for all citizens in King County as our mission states: Seattle Audubon cultivates and leads a community that values and protects birds and the natural environment.

Seattle Audubon is committed to equal opportunity and abides by all relevant laws and regulations. All Seattle Audubon programs and volunteer opportunities are administered without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, creed, national origin, age, political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, physical, mental or sensory handicap, or any other basis prohibited by law. However, Seattle Audubon reserves the right to exclude volunteers who do not support its goals.

### *Harassment Policy*

Seattle Audubon is committed to an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. All volunteers are expected to be sensitive to, and respectful of, their co-volunteers and others with whom they come into contact while representing Seattle Audubon. Seattle Audubon prohibits harassment in all forms.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on Seattle Audubon premises or circulated; and making unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or

other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

**Any behavior or activity that unreasonably interferes with others' use and enjoyment of Seattle Audubon activities, programs or facility will not be tolerated, including but not limited to:**

- Use of abusive or threatening language or gestures
- Loud, inappropriate, or argumentative or verbal or physical behavior
- Using electronic and communication devices in a manner that is disruptive to others, including wildlife
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing or footwear for the activity or program
- Interfering with the free passage of staff, volunteers or participants
- Soliciting or using handouts without permission
- Non-compliance with staff or volunteer expectations or behavior that causes unnecessary stress for leaders and other participants
- Disturbing, altering or damaging the Seattle Audubon building or grounds
- Disruptive or inappropriate behavior that would affect birds, other wildlife or habitat

#### *Use of Seattle Audubon Property*

Materials and equipment used by a volunteer while conducting SAS business should be cared for and returned after your project or activity is complete.

**Use of Seattle Audubon materials or equipment, building or grounds in any manner is not allowed if it:**

- Can be expected to damage property or the property of others
- Is likely to cause personal injury to one's self or others
- Involves locating signs, posters or other materials without permission
- Would invade others' privacy
- Would threaten Seattle Audubon's not-for-profit status
- Would be contrary to approved use of materials or equipment
- Would endanger or threaten birds or other wildlife
- Would damage habitat

#### *Tobacco, Drugs, and Alcohol*

Smoking is not permitted in the Seattle Audubon building or grounds or in the performance of official business.

Volunteering under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and/or illegal or unauthorized possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the volunteer environment is strictly forbidden.

If alcohol is part of a Seattle Audubon sponsored event, volunteers who are of age may consume the alcohol, within reason, if appropriate. If in doubt, please ask a Seattle Audubon staff member or supervisor.

#### *Firearms*

To ensure that Seattle Audubon is a place free of violence, the possession or use of perilous weapons on SAS property and at Seattle Audubon sponsored events and activities is prohibited. A license to carry the

weapon on SAS property does not supersede SAS policy. Any volunteer in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. All SAS staff and volunteers are subject to this provision.

### ***Solicitation***

No solicitation of funds for business, political causes, or charities should be done on Seattle Audubon grounds or while doing Seattle Audubon work, with the exception of fundraising performed on behalf of Seattle Audubon.

### ***Non-Profit Status & Political Campaigns***

The Seattle Audubon Society is a Washington State non-profit corporation, and a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code.

In general, 501(c)(3) status allows donors to deduct money donated as charitable contributions. As a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, Seattle Audubon operates under strict limitations concerning involvement in political campaigns. The Seattle Audubon Society cannot, directly or indirectly, become involved in campaigns for political office, or endorse, directly or indirectly, candidates for political office, whether they are partisan or non-partisan offices. As such, Seattle Audubon volunteers may not wear or display political insignia such as buttons, relating to campaigns for office, while on Seattle Audubon business or at the Seattle Audubon office. Volunteers may not answer questions about candidates for office while on Seattle Audubon business or at the office. Often, during political campaigns, Seattle Audubon gets questions about which candidates the public should support. Those questions cannot be answered while a volunteer or staff member is doing Seattle Audubon business or is at the office. Conversations about political issues or candidates should not occur while representing Seattle Audubon.

If a 501(c)(3) organization becomes involved in a political campaign in a manner that violates federal law, that organization can lose its tax-exempt status, a very serious consequence. This is why these issues are so important.

Seattle Audubon can, however, become involved in issue campaigns, such as initiatives or referenda, and engage in lobbying relating to issues that are consistent with its goals and objectives. Seattle Audubon does take positions on various initiatives and referenda for policy issues from time to time. If a volunteer is asked about the Seattle Audubon's position on any such issue, he/she should see if Seattle Audubon has taken a position officially. If so, Seattle Audubon's position can be discussed.

### ***Confidentiality and External Communication***

Volunteers and staff are required to maintain the utmost care in preserving the confidentiality of Seattle Audubon's privileged information. Membership and contribution lists are confidential as are home phone numbers and addresses of board members, staff, and volunteers. A breach of confidentiality can be in the form of improper record release, an email, or a discussion in a public place.

Volunteers may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all appropriate or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as volunteers, whether this information involves staff, volunteers, or other persons, or involves overall institutional business. Failure to maintain confidentiality could result in ending the volunteer's relationship with Seattle Audubon.

### *Representation of Seattle Audubon Positions*

Seattle Audubon volunteers are required to represent positions adopted by the Board when on official business.

### *Intellectual Property Rights*

Should work that a volunteer performs for Seattle Audubon result in the creation of intellectual property, the volunteer agrees, as a condition of volunteer employment, such intellectual property shall be deemed a work made for hire owned by Seattle Audubon, and to the extent it does not qualify as a work made for hire for any reason, the volunteer hereby irrevocably and unconditionally assigns to Seattle Audubon all right, title, and interest in and to any such intellectual property rights.

This is true even if the material developed by the volunteer is published under his/her name by Seattle Audubon or some other entity.

Data that have been collected during a SAS citizen science project belongs to the Seattle Audubon and will not be shared or distributed freely without signing a Data Usage Agreement form. The volunteer agrees that s/he will not make commercial use of the information or material developed while volunteering at Seattle Audubon, either while volunteering for or after leaving Seattle Audubon, without the express written approval of Seattle Audubon.

### *Pets and Service Animals*

Please leave your pets at home. Credentialed service animals are welcome.

### *Safety and Security*

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Good safety habits are the result of people caring about themselves, their friends, and their co-workers. If an injured person requires immediate medical care, the first priority is to make sure that the person receives that care by calling 911 and then calling Security.

While we make every effort to create a safe and comfortable working environment, many of our activities involve physical activities and outdoor elements. There may be some risk associated with volunteer activities, and volunteers participate at their own risk. Unless weather poses a significant threat, such as lightning, high winds, or snowfall, it is likely that your volunteer activity will not be canceled due to weather. Please contact your program supervisor if you are concerned about performing your volunteer duties outdoors in inclement weather.

Seattle Audubon shall be released and held harmless for accidents, damage, death, illness, or injury to volunteers suffered during or in connection with volunteer work with Seattle Audubon.

**In Case of Emergency**  
Please report any hazardous or unsafe conditions immediately to your supervisor or other Seattle Audubon staff. Call 911 for any fire, police, or medical emergencies.

## Violation of Policies

Volunteers adhere to the same guidelines of respect for the programs, staff and volunteer personnel as paid staff. When there is need for disciplinary actions, the volunteer will receive a warning by their direct supervisor of behavior that does not fit Seattle Audubon standards. After the warning the volunteer will have a period of time to change their behavior. The Volunteer Coordinator will be made aware of the situation from the beginning. Written, dated records of all policy violations and warnings will be recorded in your volunteer file.

If needed, the Volunteer Coordinator will set up a meeting to discuss the situation and possible solutions which could include assigning the volunteer to a different activity and/or job. Any changes must be agreed upon by all parties involved (volunteer, direct supervisor and volunteer coordinator) and if the behavior in question continues after this process, the volunteer may be asked to leave.

### *Volunteer Dismissal*

Seattle Audubon is not required to give reason for asking a volunteer to leave, but will do its best to communicate the cause for dismissal and/or work with the volunteer to find a better fit within the organization.

### *Grievance/Appeals/Concerns*

If a volunteer has a grievance, it is important to address the concern as soon as possible. In situations where differences arise between volunteers or between volunteers and staff it is advised to first try to resolve these differences amongst the parties involved. If a third party is needed, the Volunteer Coordinator is to be informed. Under no circumstances shall grievances be made public or involve members of the organization who are not directly involved. If the grievance is in regard to the Program Coordinator, an appeal may be made to the Executive Director.

## Volunteer Opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities are the ones we commonly recruit for. More opportunities are posted in Earthcare Northwest, E-Newsletter, Volunteer View, and [seattleaudubon.org](http://seattleaudubon.org) throughout the year.

Opportunity	Description	Activity	Add'l Info/Requirements
<b>Citizen Science</b>	One of the greatest needs for volunteers happens every spring when the Science Division trains and organizes 75-100 volunteers to monitor local bird populations. Their work helps keep an accurate census of viable populations of several bird species in the metropolitan area, often including Peregrine falcons.	Activities vary depending on the species and nesting season	Intermediate birders, often with previous field work experience; patience and ability to focus are essential.
<b>Clerical and Data Entry</b>	Assist staff with basic clerical duties including data entry, scanning, mailings, etc.	As needed	
<b>Conservation</b>	Two workgroups meet monthly and are excellent ways for volunteers to help with the Conservation Program at Seattle Audubon. The Urban Habitat workgroup develops education and outreach materials related to the Seattle Tree Map and to our Backyard Habitat program. The Marbled Murrelet workgroup supports the work of the Murrelet Survival Program through research, education, and outreach.	As needed	
<b>Nature Shop</b>	Engage customers as they come in. Aid in their choices among the nature books, binoculars and scopes, bird feeders and seed, and gifts and toys. You will be	Indefinite commitment, minimum three months. Monthly, if not weekly,	Minimum 18 years old. Knowledgeable, or willing to become knowledgeable about birds. Patient, alert,

	trained in Nature Shop systems – point-of-sale, phone and information – products and customer service.	schedule.	poised, and good with people; good phone manners, flexible; able to learn and keep current with changes in reference materials and Shop procedures. Computer literate.
<b>Garden Work Parties</b>	Join a work party to help maintain Audubon’s beautiful garden.	Work parties are scheduled as needed.	
<b>Special Events</b>	Assist with the planning and organizing of Audubon’s many special events. Watch your email and read the monthly EarthCare Northwest Newsletter for opportunities to help with upcoming special events.	As needed	
<b>Outreach</b>	Attend events in the Seattle area as a representative of Seattle Audubon – pass out brochures, educational tools, and other materials.	As needed	
<b>Specialized Skills</b>	Examples: Electrician, Carpenter, Contractor, Photographer, Copyeditor, Plumber, Lobbyist, Driver, etc.	As needed	
<b>Seattle Audubon Board</b>	Our Board of Directors play a vital role in ensuring Seattle Audubon has the strategic direction and necessary resources to create a sustainable community. In addition to their role as at large board members, several serve on Committees. We are grateful for their expertise and focus ranging from	The minimum Board commitments include bi-monthly meetings, two daylong retreats per year, committee participation, and	

	policy/legal, marketing, management, planning, conservation, science, communications, and community engagement to ensuring financial stability of the organization.	ad-hoc meetings and events.	
<b>Committees</b>	Seattle Audubon has several program committees to support our organization's mission. These committees provide their insight and experience in the areas of Environmental Education, Conservation, and Science. In addition, we have several organizational governance committees, including Development, Nominating, and Personnel Committees.	The committees meet monthly or quarterly and consist of board and non-board members.	
<b>Education</b>	Seattle Audubon education programs provide classroom and experiential learning opportunities for ages 3-103 for the purpose of creating environmental stewards and mobilizing a community to action. Volunteer group leaders are always need for Finding Urban Nature program.	Activities vary depending on the program of interest.	No teaching experience needed, Seattle Audubon provides all supplies, training, and support necessary to be a successful education volunteer. Volunteers intending to work with minors must pass a criminal background check.

## Thank you for joining us!

SAS couldn't do it without you. Volunteers are and always have been the strength and the richness of Seattle Audubon, one of the oldest and largest environmental organizations in the Northwest.