

**THE AUDUBON COOPERATIVE SANCTUARY
PROGRAM FOR GOLF COURSES**
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The Audubon Society of New York State is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of our natural resources. Our primary mission is to involve people in programs and projects that will directly benefit the quality of the environment. To carry out this mission, we have created the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System.

The Cooperative Sanctuary System is divided into four programs. These include: Golf, Schools, Corporate and Business Lands, and Individually owned properties. The key to our program rests in the word "Cooperative." New York Audubon believes that much more will be gained for the quality of our environment if a positive and proactive agenda for citizen involvement is instituted, rather than a negative, "anti-everything" approach.

New York Audubon is one of many Audubon organizations that exist in the United States. Each of these Audubon Societies is independent. They are not connected by Boards of Directors or by any other legal connection. Each group is free to take positions on environmental issues as they deem appropriate. New York Audubon is the only Audubon Society that has taken the positive approach to its logical conclusion and created the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System. In many cases, we are working with other Audubon Societies and conservation groups in order to provide as much positive support as possible to our many cooperating members.

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses simply encourages those who manage or own golf courses to register their courses as Cooperative Sanctuaries. The annual fee is \$100. For this commitment, the course will receive a membership packet which includes, among other materials, a Resource Inventory Form. This simple form is an opportunity for the Superintendent, or others, to let New York Audubon know about the course. In this regard, people send maps, photographs, write descriptions of the property, let us know what kind of wildlife is already found on the course, and so forth. From this Inventory, staff of New York Audubon will prepare a Conservation Report for the course. The course management decides in which projects or activities they would like to become involved.

As an incentive, New York Audubon has established seven categories from which courses may choose to work toward certification. Environmental Planning, Public Involvement, Wildlife Cover Enhancement, Water Conservation, Integrated Pest Management are some examples of areas where certificates will be presented to the course when certain standards are met.

In addition, we provide assistance in working with media through press releases for those courses that want some publicity for their efforts. Some courses prefer to retain their privacy and we respect that preference. Of key importance to the overall success of the program is informing golfers of your efforts on the course. It is the golfers that put the greatest demand on the course management to keep the course in perfect shape. What is "perfect" to one golfer may not be "perfect" to another. This discrepancy is sometimes compounded by the fact that the golfer who is complaining loudest about the condition of the course is also the one who just had a bad round.

We also promote the concept of "Integrated Resource Management"--all items on the course, from turf to trees, and from birds to bugs are resources. Some of these resources may be overabundant in a particular location on the course, and therefore impact another resource. For example, Canada Geese are migratory birds which are protected by law. But, if too many Geese utilize a small portion of a course, there could be an adverse impact on that section of the course as well as other resources in that location. We suggest that the Cooperative Sanctuary manager should first try to assess what aspects of that location encourage the geese to be there in the first place. All living creatures need food, cover, water, and space to survive. It's possible that the present management of a lake or surrounding vegetation has created perfect feeding and nesting habitat for geese. Sometimes simple alterations in the habitat will not only discourage geese, but at the same time provide habitat for a number of other species that may not be as problematical as the geese. Merging your efforts to maintain quality turf while maintaining quality wildlife habitat is good for golf and the environment.

We encourage participation in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses for four reasons:

1. It is good for the game of golf.
2. It is good for the professionalism of superintendents.
3. It is good for the environment.
4. It is good for the environmental movement.