

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses

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Objectives:

1. Enhance wildlife habitats on existing golf courses by working with golf course superintendents and providing advice for ecologically sound course management.
2. Encourage active participation in conservation programs by golfers, golf course superintendents, golf officials, and the general public.
3. Recognize the people who are actively participating in environmentally responsible projects.
4. Educate the public and golfing community about the benefits of golf courses and the role they play relative to the environment and wildlife.

Start Date: 1991

Project Duration: ongoing

Total Funding: \$100,000 per year

As of June 30, 2002, the end of Audubon International's fiscal year, 2,094 courses throughout the United States were enrolled in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP). Nearly one-half (46%) of ACSP golf course members have completed an environmental plan to guide their management efforts. A total of 341 golf courses (16%) have achieved the distinction of Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for their efforts to implement and document a full complement of conservation activities, including chemical use reduction and safety, water conservation and water quality management, and wildlife habitat improvement.

The Audubon Signature Program enrolled 12 new golf course members during the fiscal year. That brought the total to 102 properties in 32 U.S. states and three countries (Portugal, Canada, and Puerto Rico). The number of Certified Audubon Signature Sanctuaries rose from 27 to 36 in 15 U.S. states and Portugal.

Audubon International published *A Guide to Environmental Stewardship on the Golf Course* in 2002. This second edition is designed to help superintendents and others interested in environmental management to blend environmentally responsible practices into the day-to-day operations of golf course management. Educational seminars, presentations, and field visits by Audubon International staff reached an audience of 4,200 in 2001/02, a record total.

A second year of data from Audubon International's two-year survey on Environmental Improvement on Golf Courses was compiled and published in 2002. Results indicate that the ACSP is paying significant dividends for the environment. For instance, golf courses reported that they were able to increase wildlife habitat from an average of 45 acres to nearly 67 acres per course—an increase of 22 acres per golf course.

Nearly 70 percent reported that they had decreased water use, many by an average of 1.9 million gallons of water per year per course. Eighty-two percent decreased pesticide use and 91 percent used pesticides with a lower toxicity level since joining.

These results were achieved without a loss in playing quality or golfer satisfaction. In fact, 99% reported that playing quality had improved (50%) or been maintained (49%); 99% reported that golfer satisfaction had improved (66%) or been maintained (34%).

Audubon International received a 2002 Most Valuable Pollution Prevention Award (MVP2) from the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable. The Roundtable is the largest membership organization in the United States devoted solely to pollution prevention (P2).

Summary Points

- Number of golf courses enrolled in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program: 2,094 golf courses
- Number of golf courses enrolled in the Audubon Signature Program: 102 in 32 U.S. states and three countries
- Average increase in the number of acres devoted to providing wildlife habitat per ACSP golf course: 22 acres (up from 45 to 67 acres per course)
- Percentage of ACSP golf courses that decreased water usage since joining the program: 69%
- Percentage of ACSP golf courses that improved cultural control methods to decrease the need for chemical use: 89%
- Number of bird species sighted on 48 golf courses participating in the 2002 North American Birdwatching Open: 295
- Number of Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Golf Courses: 341
- Total number of golf courses certified in Environmental Planning: 954 (46%)
- Number of golf courses certified in two or more program components: 481 (23%)
- Number of requests for certification reviewed in 2001/02: 493
- Percentage of certification requests awarded: 92%
- Number of golf course personnel and others educated by Audubon International in 2001/02 through classroom seminars, conference presentations, team meetings, and fieldwork: 4,200



One of the objectives of Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses is to work with superintendents to enhance wildlife habitats on existing golf courses.