

We recognize that the human production and consumption of fossil fuels is contributing to a change in our atmosphere's chemistry that causes increased seasonal temperatures, more extreme weather events, and increased drought and wildfire. The trends we are already seeing, including warmer than average March temperatures in Montana, are expected to increase over the next century. Changes associated with climate are expected to alter the range distribution of many species, though it's understood that effects are likely to be species-specific. Isolated, rare, or specialist wildlife species are particularly sensitive to climate change, and it is expected that the numbers of these species will decline, while already common, invasive, and/or generalist species will increase in number.



Beyond impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat, climate change presents the real and present threat of decreased air and water quality to all communities. This is especially true for communities where extreme drought or flooding are a threat or for places like Montana, that straddle the wildland-urban interface and are at risk for increased wildfire. These effects of climate change are expected to increase the prevalence of wildlife disease, the spread of noxious or invasive organisms, and the spread of infectious human disease. Climate change truly presents a threat and challenge to all aspects of the ecosystems on which we depend. An urgent focus on education and the development of political will to address climate change is imperative.

## The policy of Montana Audubon regarding Climate Change is to:

- Educate the public and decision makers about the impacts climate change can have on our wildlife and their habitats and about climate changes' connection to the accumulation of atmospheric greenhouse gases
- Educate the public and decision makers about ways to reduce the accumulation of atmospheric greenhouse gases;
- Recognize and endorse efforts to reduce the accumulation of atmospheric greenhouse gases as a means of reducing climate change impacts on wildlife and humans;
- Encourage the inclusion of wildlife considerations in the design and implementation of activities to reduce the accumulation of greenhouse gases;
- Encourage natural resource management activities that increase carbon sequestration and conserve and restore natural ecosystems, as these activities also have substantial wildlife benefits;
- Recognize that climate change presents our society with policy challenges beyond environmental quality, and that the challenges are present at multiple governmental levels;
- Encourage land management that facilitates the dispersal of sensitive species and maintains intact ecosystems.