

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

**2023-2026**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

A strategic plan to promote sustainability in the Bay Area and beyond  
by engaging communities in avian science, habitat restoration, and  
education



SAN FRANCISCO BAY  
BIRD OBSERVATORY

[www.sfbbo.org](http://www.sfbbo.org)

# INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) has served as a focal point for avian research, habitat conservation, and environmental education for more than 40 years.

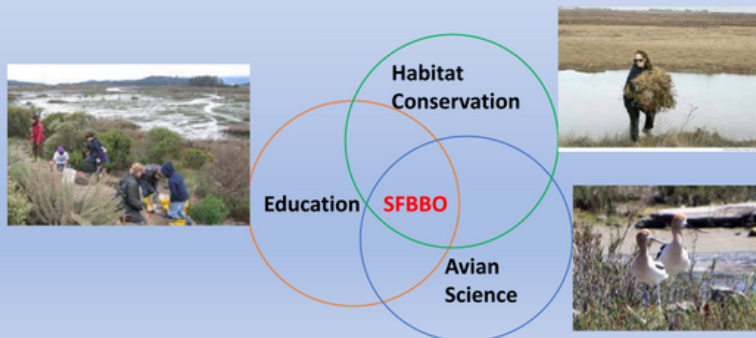
During that time, environmental challenges to bird habitats and human communities have increased dramatically due to urban growth, global climate change, and other human activity. We believe that this new Strategic Plan will enable us to more effectively promote sustainability in the Bay Area and beyond by leveraging our expertise in avian science, habitat conservation, and education.

In 2022, SFBBO engaged in a strategic planning process to chart the course for the next three years, from 2023-2026. The early stages of that process focused on our commitment to making our organization and its work more inclusive, while maintaining the breadth and quality of our work. SFBBO has an opportunity to engage communities in new ways, to incorporate more diversity in our staff, our board and our partnerships.

Following extensive discussions among staff and the Board of Directors, we adopted an exciting new Mission Statement that puts community engagement front and center with respect to the programs SFBBO conducts. Our new Mission Statement, below, shows the interconnections between all our programs and Bay Area communities.

## **SFBBO Mission Statement:**

***Promoting sustainability in the Bay Area and beyond by engaging communities in avian science, habitat conservation and education***



**Over the next three years**, we will significantly widen and deepen our community engagement by pursuing three broad strategies:



## INFORM

We will expand the use of our data and research, and engage with other scientific communities and resource-management agencies, to address climate change, habitat loss, and other environmental issues.



## INSPIRE

We will inspire people to ACT to protect birds and to promote sustainability. To accomplish this, we will build upon our current suite of communications and youth and adult-education programs to serve more diverse communities, deepen their engagement with our organization, and challenge them to take action to promote sustainability.

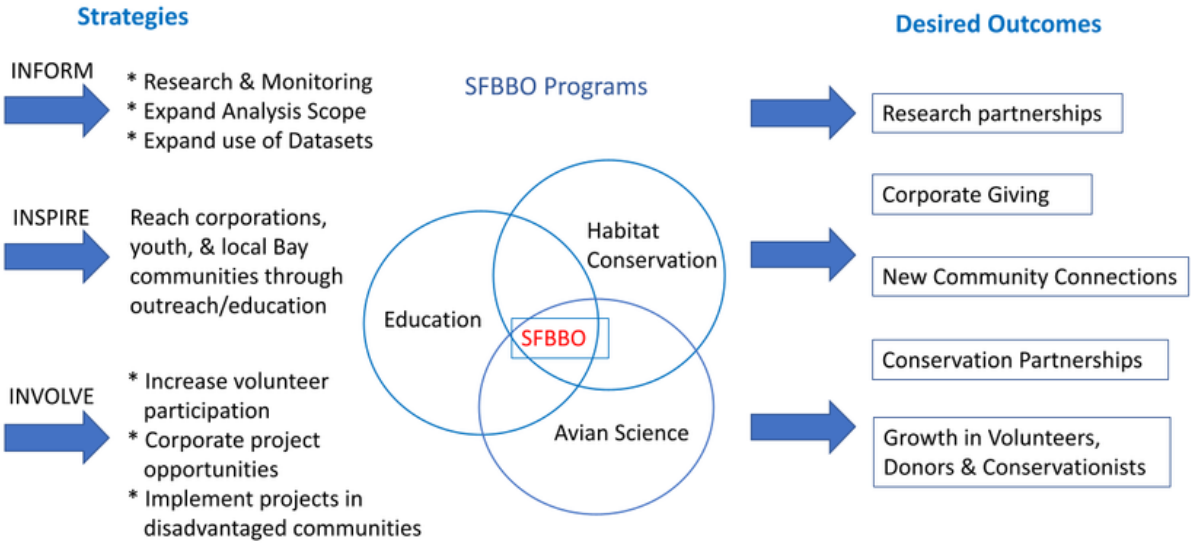


## INVOLVE

We will promote sustainability by engaging more diverse groups of volunteers and partners in our work to collect scientific data and to restore habitats.

The following pages summarize our strategic priorities and the key breakthrough activities required to achieve our mission. We invite you to join us in our mission to promote a healthy, sustainable environment for all species and all people in the Bay Area and beyond. Please visit [www.sfbbo.org](http://www.sfbbo.org) to learn more.

**OUR MISSION: Promoting sustainability in the Bay Area and beyond by engaging communities in avian science, habitat conservation and education**



# INFORM

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We will expand the use of our data and research, and engage with other scientific communities and resource-management agencies, to address climate change, habitat loss, and other environmental issues. To accomplish this, we plan to:

## Share Our Research

We will engage the science community by attending and presenting at science conferences and publishing our work in peer-reviewed publications.

We will also engage the corporate community in projects to develop databases and other technological solutions that can assist us in our data collection, analysis, implementation, and dissemination. In addition, we will share the best practices we have developed in habitat restoration with other agencies and groups who are also improving habitats so that we can amplify the impact of our knowledge and work.



## Inform Resource Managers

We will use our data and data from other organizations to help us predict climate change impacts on avian and human communities and guide us to sustainable solutions.



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# INFORM

We will also lead and influence the decisions that resource managers and policy makers (i.e. government agencies) make regarding birds and habitats by sharing our data, analysis, and modeling predictions with them.

In addition, we will gain feedback from all of the communities who interact with our research, in order to improve our practices and learn and share the impact that our efforts have had on our mission to promote sustainability.



## Build Partnerships

We will collaborate with the wider scientific community on research projects to engage in research across geography and time for the protection and restoration of ecosystems.

We will also collaborate with other environmental organizations' efforts to study birds and improve habitats.

In addition, we will engage universities by sharing our data sets and involving students in the collection and analysis of our research and growing the next generation of scientists.



# INSPIRE

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We will inspire people to ACT to protect birds and to promote sustainability. To accomplish this, we will build upon our current suite of communications and youth and adult-education programs to serve more diverse communities, deepen their engagement with our organization, and challenge them to take action to promote sustainability. This includes Communication Campaigns, Community Action, and Corporate Partnerships.



Photo Credit: Alisha Mangilia

## Communications Campaigns

We will enhance our communications campaigns and integrate our website to increase the public's understanding of how climate change, habitat loss, and other issues impact their neighborhood birds, ecosystems, and human communities, including issues of environmental justice.



# INSPIRE

## Community Action

We will challenge people from all backgrounds to help solve these issues by creating a menu of ideas that they can engage in—both in their personal lives and with their local communities. We will also invite them to share their “Stories of Success,” with us, which we will share with the public to inspire others to join our mission.



## Corporate Partnerships

We will take advantage of our position within Silicon Valley by developing a new Corporate Engagement Strategy that includes opportunities for corporate employees to participate in habitat restoration, and inspires them to help amplify our message to their audiences, share their technical and business expertise, and underwrite our efforts to serve more diverse communities.



# INVOLVE

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We will promote sustainability by engaging more diverse groups of volunteers and partners in our work to collect scientific data and to restore habitats. To accomplish this, we will offer hands on scientific field work, a new corporate engagement strategy, education programs for youth, and volunteer engagement.



## Hands On Scientific Field Work

We will provide more opportunities for individuals and groups of volunteers to participate in practical, authentic field and research work in support of our Mission. We will also integrate additional training and educational components to participants as appropriate.





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# INVOLVE

## New Corporate Engagement Strategy

We will incorporate corporate groups in ongoing opportunities with tangible and measurable benefits to birds and their habitats. This will include field work, in-kind donations, and funding support. We will prioritize local projects that benefit currently underrepresented communities where possible.

## Educational Programs for Youth

We will expand our educational programs for youth and create new opportunities that engage students in community science based projects that both benefit birds and provide authentic mentoring and training for young adults in the fields of scientific research and methodology. Where possible, we will also prioritize engaging student populations that have historically been underrepresented in these outreach efforts.



## Volunteer Engagement

We will create greater opportunities for volunteer engagement, cross-program training, and professional development, with a special focus on partnering with underserved communities.



# ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

In order to accomplish these strategic initiatives in a timely and sustainable fashion, we have identified several operational elements that will require corresponding organizational change or growth. They fall under the following categories: DEI, Fund Development, Human Resources, Finance, and Board Development. (photo credit Sebastian Kennerknecht)

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DEI is core to the values of SFBBO as an organization. To ensure that we fully internalize and apply our commitment to DEI, we will:

- Conduct an assessment of DEI within our current organizational practices and share the findings with our community
- Ensure that our personnel policies include best DEI practices for job advertising, hiring, onboarding, training, and communications internally and externally.

## Fund Development

To build the necessary organizational capacity to implement the Strategic Plan, we will:

- Write a “Case Statement for Support” in Year One that clarifies our role and significance to our community of supporters
- Develop a new “Corporate Engagement” strategy that offers opportunities for volunteer participation and direct and in-kind support
- Develop and implement a new “Legacy Fund” as a planned giving option for supporters.

## Human Resources

Our employees are our most important resource. To enhance employee satisfaction and retention, we will:

- Update our current personnel policies, performance review processes, and compensation practices to ensure that SFBBO provides a sustainable workplace environment for all employees that is aligned to our organizational mission, values, and culture.
- Expand the range of professional and career-development opportunities that are available for staff.

## Finance

The financial model for SFBBO has historically been a hybrid of nonprofit fundraising, avian monitoring, and habitat conservation contracts, academic research grants, and fee-based services. To better ensure that our financial model can support our future growth under the Strategic Plan, we will:

- Enhance program management by creating more informative financial management tools and reports.
- Evaluate our current business model and agree on appropriate changes to it, including the setting of contract rates and necessary underwriting for programs that are offered in support of our mission.

## Board Development

The Board will improve its effectiveness in order to support the organization and its mission more effectively. We will:

- Further increase the Board's diversity to better represent the communities we engage with.
- Improve Board development and recruitment to enable Board members to successfully contribute their time and expertise to the organization. (photo credit Ingrid Taylor)

# A Note From Our Executive Director

On behalf of the Board and staff of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO), I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone who played their part in the year-long process that has culminated in this Strategic Plan. Our intentionally wide-ranging and inclusive process sought feedback from literally thousands of you via online surveys, focus groups, and an in-person Board/staff retreat. We have listened to your feedback and your hopes and goals for the future of SFBBO and have crafted this vision and mission to bring them to reality.

I am truly inspired and excited by the direction that we are headed, building upon our proud forty-plus year legacy of exceptional avian science and conservation, to a future where we can be even more effective in leveraging that work in the service of birds and their habitats to address climate change, habitat loss, and other environmental issues.

We acknowledge that we cannot accomplish this alone though, and are reconfirming our commitment to be more inclusive in the ways that we function as an organization, and the efforts that we make to engage a larger and more diverse community of participants in our work.

The completion of our planning process and the creation of this Strategic Plan marks the end of one phase and the beginning of the next. We look forward to sharing regular updates about the implementation of this plan with you, including ways in which you can be more involved. I thank you for your ongoing support and invite you to join us as we embark upon this bold new vision, mission and journey.

In appreciation,

Chris Overmyka

