



AUDUBON CONNECTICUT LAUNCHES PROGRAM TO PROTECT A WIDESPREAD SPECIES OF CONCERN

Greenwich, Conn. – Monday, June 11, 2018 – Starting summer 2018, sharp-eyed bird watchers in Connecticut will start noticing something new about our state’s treasured American Oystercatchers (AMOY)—yellow leg bands. The birds aren’t making a fashion statement, this bling is part of Audubon Connecticut’s American Oystercatcher Banding Program, an exciting effort designed to help protect this species of conservation concern in Connecticut and throughout the Atlantic Flyway.

The primary goal of the program is to assess the movement patterns and survival rates of the AMOY species, which is at risk due to low population size, limited habitat availability, and vulnerability to climate change and disturbance. This will be accomplished over several years (2018-2021) as birds are banded and then observed. The AMOYs will be carefully captured by trained staff who then place a USGS (United States Geological Survey) metal incoloy band on the bottom section of a leg as well as an alphanumeric coded band on each upper leg to uniquely mark adults and juveniles (when their legs reach adult size). Different states use different color alphanumeric bands. Connecticut, Rhodes Island, and Massachusetts have been assigned yellow, while New York and New Jersey use orange. The bands do not harm or discomfort the birds and serve as the identifying tool to track movement, behavior, and population levels. Audubon is working with the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) on the project.

“The key to the success of this program will be in the collection of observations or sightings through the AMOY Working Group,” says Corrie Folsom-O’Keefe of Audubon Connecticut. The AMOY Working Group is a collaboration between states along the Atlantic Coast that share banding data to analyze the migration and population of AMOY. Folsom-O’Keefe further explains “Because we historically do not know where most of the AMOY that nest in Connecticut go after the breeding season, the information gained from this program will be incredibly helpful in identifying the locations where the species stops during migration and lives in the winter.” Audubon will also gain a better understanding of movement patterns within the state and whether individuals return from year to year. Researchers, volunteers, bird watchers, and citizens who report their sightings will be providing critical data that will improve our knowledge of the ecology of AMOY and help advance the conservation of this vulnerable species.

To learn more about AMOY banding and how to identify a band and report a sighting, go online to amoywg.org/banding-reporting.

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Audubon Connecticut, the state office of the National Audubon Society with more than 17,000 members in the state, works to protect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through education, research, conservation, and legislative advocacy for the benefit of humanity and the earth’s biological diversity. Through our network of nature centers, protected wildlife sanctuaries, and local, volunteer Chapters, we seek to connect people with nature and inspire the next generation of conservationists. Learn more at AudubonCT.org.

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