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Three Midwest bird conservation groups become Bird Alliances Chicago, Detroit, and Madison Audubon chapters will adopt new names

Friday, October 20, 2023—Three large bird conservation organizations in the Midwest are adopting new names: Chicago Audubon, Detroit Audubon, and Madison Audubon (based in southern Wisc.) will become Chicago Bird Alliance, Detroit Bird Alliance, and Badgerland Bird Alliance, respectively.

The new shared name exemplifies each group’s work on behalf of birds, and to inspire appreciation for them in our world. The name clearly highlights the ways in which conservation efforts have always been built on collaboration and partnerships: between individuals, communities, and organizations.

“Our approach has always been to bring nature and people together in a way that serves both,” said Gretchen Abrams, executive director, Detroit Audubon (soon-to-be Detroit Bird Alliance). “It was important for us to collaborate with other Audubon chapters—especially those in our region—in adopting a name that unifies our members and unifies us as organizations.”

All three organizations will continue to be chapters affiliated with the National Audubon Society, which announced in March 2023 that it would retain the “Audubon” name. Following serious consideration of John James Audubon’s legacy, and the harm and barriers his name created among many community members, several chapters decided to drop the “Audubon” name.

“Our chapters believe that bird conservation should center birds and collaboration, rather than celebrate a historical figure that is aligned with systemic racism,” said Judy Pollock, president of Chicago Audubon Society (soon-to-be Chicago Bird Alliance). “We are happy to be part of a new group of chapters using this name, and welcome other chapters, community members, and partners to join us in our work.”

“When you recognize John James Audubon’s environmental legacy, you also have to grapple with his full legacy,” said Matt Reetz, Badgerland Bird Alliance executive director. “After talking to community members and partners, and listening to our members, we learned that for some groups, Audubon simply meant ‘birds’—but for many others, it meant harm. It’s not enough to just put an asterisk next to the name. We needed to have our name promote our work: bird conservation that includes everyone.”

Throughout the renaming process, these chapters and many others have been collaborating to seek an alternative, unifying name. The three new Bird Alliance members join Golden Gate Bird Alliance (formerly Golden Gate Audubon Society), renamed in August 2023. Seattle's chapter was the first to announce they would pursue a name change in July 2022, and renamed their chapter Birds Connect Seattle in March 2023. These chapters are all working collaboratively to create a more inclusive birding culture.

To learn more about Badgerland Bird Alliance's reasons, process, and timeline for finding a new name, and watch the announcement video, visit madisonaudubon.org/new-name

To learn more about Chicago Bird Alliance, [visit chicagoaudubon.org](https://chicagoaudubon.org)

To learn more about Detroit Audubon (soon-to-be Detroit Bird Alliance), visit detroitaudubon.org/detroit-audubon-to-change-its-name-new-name-same-mission

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About Badgerland Bird Alliance

Badgerland Bird Alliance is a nonprofit conservation organization serving communities across 10 counties in southern Wisconsin. The organization improves habitat for wildlife through land protection and restoration, provides environmental education for all ages, and advocates for nature and people.

About Chicago Bird Alliance

The Chicago Bird Alliance is a chapter of the National Audubon Society that serves the City of Chicago and most suburbs in Cook County. We believe in connecting all people with birds and nature through direct engagement, communication, and advocacy.

About Detroit Audubon (soon-to-be Detroit Bird Alliance)

Founded in 1939, Detroit Audubon serves members in Detroit and across southeast Michigan with a mission to foster the appreciation and conservation of birds and the environment we share.

Media Contact:

Kaitlin Svabek, Communications Coordinator
Badgerland Bird Alliance
madisonaudubon.org
ksvabek@madisonaudubon.org

Media Contact:

Gretchen Abrams, Executive Director
Detroit Audubon (soon-to-be Detroit Bird Alliance)
detroitaudubon.org
detroitauduboned@gmail.com