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## Creation Care Ministry

OLPH, Spring is now upon us and you can help care for God’s creatures. As Part II of an earlier article, the Creation Care Ministry is sharing a few things that you and your family can do this Spring and Summer in the spirit of “Laudato Si.” Please read and share this with your children as by their nature, they love to protect God’s creatures!



These tips come from the **National Audubon Society**.

### 1. Become a scientist

Everyday bird observations provide crucial data for scientists studying the big and small questions about bird lives, from migration to the effects of global climate change.



You can help by becoming a citizen scientist, observing and noting the kinds of birds you see.

- Join the **Great Backyard Bird Count** (<https://www.birdcount.org/>). In 2012 it tallied 17.4 million observations and 623 species, including an influx of snowy owls from the Arctic.
- Sign up on the Audubon website for a **Christmas Bird Count** (<https://www.audubon.org/birds>), or enlist in a new effort to track hummingbirds. Visit <https://www.audubon.org> for more.
- Track your sightings on eBird (<https://ebird.org/home>), a website developed by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. (<https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home>)

### 2. Create communities

Share your passion for birds with family and friends. Expand your patch of bird habitat into a larger urban oasis by working with neighbors and managers of nearby parks, golf courses, and farms. You will help restore habitat in linked corridors, multiplying the effectiveness of each patch. Restoring bird habitat can also help mitigate a city’s “heat island effect,” absorb stormwater runoff, and combat the spread of invasive plants.

Consider a program like Bird CityWisconsin (<https://birdcitywisconsin.org/>). Join the program or start your own! In Wisconsin, Milwaukee Audubon (<https://www.milwaukeeaudubon.org/>) helped launch this program. It was modeled, in part, on the Arbor Day Foundation’s Tree City USA program. (<https://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/>) Sixty Wisconsin communities have been recognized as “Bird Cities” so far for habitat protection and forest management.

Maybe we can do this for Glenview!

### 3. Shop for the birds

Buy grassland-bird-friendly hamburgers. Conventionally produced beef comes from animals fed corn and soybeans, crops grown on what used to be the great American prairie. Buying grass-fed meat supports grassland birds, which, because of habitat loss, are showing the most sustained declines of any bird group in the United States. Switch to shade-grown coffee. Each cup preserves roughly two square feet of rainforest.



## seek, share, rejoice - creation care ministry...

Even lumber can be bird-friendly; woodlands certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (<https://us.fsc.org/en-us>) aim to conserve biological diversity by protecting old-growth stands, monitoring clear-cutting, and limiting pesticide use.

### 4. Save energy, cut carbon emissions

Leaving your car at home twice a week—and walking or biking instead—can reduce your emissions by two tons a year (and it's healthy for you, too). Make conservation a family challenge. Keep a journal and award points for conservation activities, including miles walked, biked, or covered on mass transit instead of driving; each time lights are turned off when leaving the room; and unplugging electronic devices overnight.

### 5. Part with plastics

The first plastic bags were produced in 1957, according to Worldwatch Institute, and we now throw away 100 billion a year. Many eventually wash into the ocean to join oceanic garbage patches, drifting gyres of trash that spread over huge sea areas.

Every year the floating “bladders” of these bags kill hundreds of thousands of seabirds—along with sea turtles and marine mammals—which mistake them for jellyfish and squid, and then starve to death after filling their guts with plastic.

Using less plastic also saves energy and, thus, bird habitat. Plastic is made from petroleum and requires energy—more fossil fuels—to go from oil to consumer good.

### 6. Curb your cats

Keep your felines inside or in outdoor “kitty condos.” America’s estimated 150 million outdoor cats kill serious numbers of birds—up to 3.7 billion a year, according to a new report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Smithsonian’s Migratory Bird Center.

Tiny radio transmitters affixed to gray catbird nestlings in the Washington, D.C., suburbs by scientists from the Smithsonian Institution and Towson University showed that predators killed about 80 percent of those birds after they fledged (more than was sustainable) and that cats were responsible for nearly half those deaths. House cats in the study by University of Georgia and National Geographic Society researchers carried tiny videocameras. The footage shocked the cats’ owners, revealing 44 percent of their pets were cutthroats; those cats averaged one kill every 17 hours outdoors.

### 7. Adopt-a-species

Pick a bird species from your flyway (choose from a list at [audm.ag/AudPlan](http://audm.ag/AudPlan)). Become an advocate for that species: work to protect and restore its habitat, educate your community, talk with schoolkids, or volunteer at a preserve or nature center.

Learning about “your” species will enrich your connection with nature and give you a new understanding of the region where you live.

Let’s take care of God’s creatures OLPH!

*The Creation Care Ministry*



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