



# GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



An approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing

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## Green Gaps

### *Birds and Two Issues*

In the world of green intentions and actual human practice there is a "gap" that confronts sociologists, marketers, and conservationists alike. That gap can be summarized by last year's [OgilvyEarth study](#) which revealed that 82% of Americans have green or environmental intentions when it comes to life styles, shopping, and public policy, but that only 16% are dedicated to fulfilling those lofty goals. That puts 66% in the gap between aspirations and actions.



But there are actually multiple internal gaps involved, and here are just two: a price gap, and a climate gap. All are very real, but both can be addressed, at least partially, through countervailing bird-related issues.

The first is an ever-present price gap, suggesting that "greener" products are more expensive than non-green products.

The second is a climate gap, illustrated by the findings from multiple surveys which indicate that about two-thirds of Americans believe in global warming, yet over four-fifths of them don't have a clue on how to calculate their carbon footprint.

Price isn't always a barrier, although it may be increasingly compelling in hard economic times. Of course, the "easier" and "cheaper" short-term social costs of non-green decisions - concerning public policy - are often far more expensive than the long-term greener or eco-conscious decisions. But long-term economic decisions are often put off for the long term! Still, even short-term price decisions in tough times can become convincing.

Take bottled water. Please. At a time when the country faces devastating drought comparable to the 1950s and even 1930s, spending money on bottled water ought to look remarkably thoughtless. (The fact that it takes about three liters of water to produce one liter of bottled water should be a compelling enough reason to avoid that waste.) Drinking from reusable bottles makes conservation and economic sense. This subject has appeared [before in a GBP bulletin](#).



Bird-compatible coffee, too, is price attractive. Discounting the poor quality and mass-produced supermarket blend coffees, shade-grown coffee has become comparable in

price to most quality coffees today. Not only does it taste good and save birds, it's not any more expensive than other quality coffees.

The same could be said about American-grown and bird-compatible rice, a subject discussed in [GBP before](#). There is probably no other major staple that Americans already consume that is so eco-friendly... and so "normal." (The perception that green products are "not for normal people" is another barrier that researchers have discovered.) The only problem here is that the public is generally unaware that their consumption is already green, or simply that a slight shift in consumption here could do so much good.

The second green gap deals with climate change. The climate scene can be mind-boggling to the public and be thought of as too large to tackle. The issue can make people feel powerless, make them feel that they can make no real difference. The computation of a carbon footprint, moreover, can leave the public "floundering in the purgatory of carbon calculus," in the words of the OgilvyEarth study. The counter-point is to measure if you can do any good whatsoever. The best way is to present personal, positive, and plausible alternative behaviors, those which lead to *tangible results*. A carbon offset program - a bird-habitat-oriented program - where participants can identify and witness real change is one that can have a chance. Yes, indeed, this has also been discussed [before in a GBP bulletin](#).



There is another enormous green gap that needs to be addressed, one that also has bird implications and bird answers: a gender gap. Such a gender gap was reflected by the OgilvyEarth findings that over 80% of respondents said that going green is a feminine trait. If "green" is viewed as the new "pink," it means that half the population of the country - the male half - may have an automatic negative opinion of the product or action. This huge topic will have to be addressed in another issue of GBP. And it will!

## ***Birds: Seeing, Sharing, and Saving***

*P2F: 24-26 August*

There is, perhaps, nothing so rewarding in the whole birding experience than sharing it with others, nothing so satisfying than opening others to the wonder and enjoyment of nature through birds. After all, birds are exceedingly attractive; they are everywhere around us; they are approachable; and they are changing through the seasons.



It sounds simple: just share the birds. But it's not always that easy. Folks interested in birds may be preoccupied with finding their own personal enjoyment, or reluctant to "impose" their interest on others, or simply satisfied with sharing the birds with similar-minded folks who are already committed.

That's where "Pledge to Fledge" comes in.

The Pledge to Fledge (P2F) effort challenges bird enthusiasts of every interest and skill level to share the wonder of birds with others. The idea is to bring all sorts of friends and acquaintances, neighbors and their families, outdoors to see and enjoy birds, perhaps for the first time. And the idea is to do it together. P2F has identified the weekend of 24-26 August as an ideal time to introduce newcomers to birds.

On this P2F weekend, non-birding friends should get a taste of the bird watching pastime, be nurtured into becoming casual birders, and then, perhaps, become citizens concerned about saving birds and the habitats where the birds live. It can be as easy as showing a neighbor how to set up backyard feeders or build a bird-friendly backyard, engage a park or refuge "Friends" group with some birding options, get some youth involved in digital bird-and-nature photography, or making a point of sharing your binoculars and scope at a popular birding destination with curious passers-by.

Here is the opportunity to make a deliberate P2F weekend experience part of a regular practice.

You can read more about this August launch, access tools, share photos, and sign on to the related P2F pledge [here](#).

### Words to Consider:

"A life without birds is like meat without seasoning."

- Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) American author, poet, philosopher, abolitionist, and naturalist

### GBP Bulletin Archives

Great Birding Projects is a vehicle to promote a creative approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing. It is not "strictly birding," and it is not "strictly conservation." Instead, GBP functions as a bridge to an innovative engagement between people and birds. You can access all previous issues of the *GBP Bulletin* on the GBP website [here](#).

