

## Testing the Efficacy of Bird-Friendly Maple

### 1. Project Abstract

- Applicant Entity: Audubon Vermont, a state program of the National Audubon Society
- Duration of Project: 36 months
- Amount of Federal Funding Requested: \$42,000
- Amount of Non-Federal Match Committed: \$53,500
- Project Title: Testing the Efficacy of Bird-Friendly Maple
- Geographic Location: Vermont state-wide
- Project Description: The future of Vermont's forest birds and maple sugaring industry are tightly linked; the same northern hardwood forests that supply nearly half of our country's maple syrup each year are also home to some of the highest diversity and abundance of breeding birds in the continental United States. In an effort to promote maple sugarbush management with birds in mind, Audubon Vermont and its partners developed the Bird-Friendly Maple Project in 2014. *Now, five years later and as we look to expand both the scope and scale of the project, it is time to test its efficacy for the target bird species of conservation concern.* This market-based approach to bird and forest conservation incentivizes and recognizes maple producers for managing their sugarbushes in ways that support bird habitat by providing unique product labeling and marketing opportunities. Currently there are 37 Vermont maple syrup producers involved in the project and the interest continues to grow. In addition interest in replicating the project has come from New York, Maine, and Massachusetts. With the increased interest comes the logical question of the on-the-ground impacts to the breeding bird community the project is intending to conserve. *A scientific and statistically valid study is needed at this time in order to address this question.* Audubon will partner with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies to design and implement the study. The results will be used to adapt the current criteria for producer recognition under the *Bird-Friendly Maple Project* as needed in order to maximize benefits to the sugarbush and the birds nesting there, ultimately leading to a true certification program. Subsequently current NRCS practices, such as [Integrating Timber/Songbird Habitat Management \(VT-666\)](#), will be promoted as approaches to helping enhance bird habitat in the sugarbush. Preparation of a manuscript for a peer-reviewed journal will ensure the results of the study are published and disseminated to the greater community.
- State Priority Addressed: Forestry and Wildlife Habitat
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