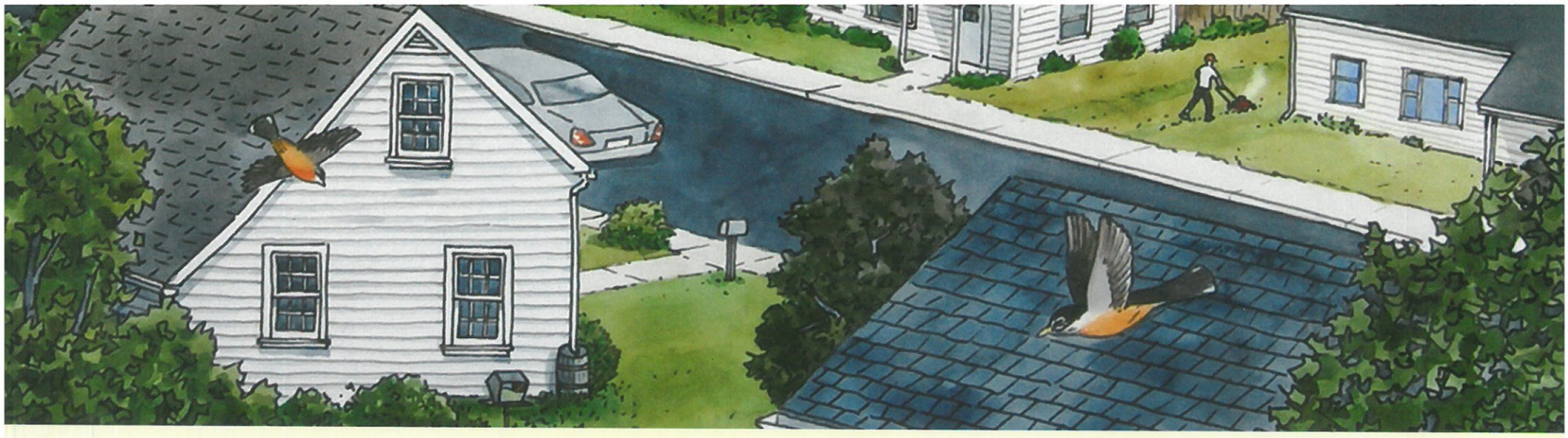

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CREATING A HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOOD

When you and your neighbors join together to create habitat for birds, bats, and butterflies, the impact of your individual efforts will be multiplied many times over. Your combined efforts can create a healthy refuge for wildlife and people by connecting isolated patches of habitat and by restoring the ecological integrity of your community.

Community "Birdscapes"

Birdscaping—providing food, water, protective cover, and nesting sites for birds—is a way to create a community that sustains human health and local bird populations. Birdscaping can help ensure the survival of the many species that winter, nest, migrate through, or live year-round in your area.

Native plants that provide nesting, cover, and foraging opportunities for birds help to replace natural habitats destroyed by development and to reconnect your community with surrounding natural landscapes. Consult with your local NRCS office to identify native plants suited to the local soil conditions.

If there are streams or wetlands in your neighborhood, vegetative buffers that protect water quality and reduce flooding can also provide habitat for native birds. Work with local water protection agencies to maintain streamside vegetation—for you and the birds. For more information on how to help birds in your neighborhood, visit www.audubonathome.org/neighborhood.

Bat Town

There are 47 bat species in the United States, and many help to control insect populations in urban, suburban, and rural communities. By providing roosting places for common crevice-dwelling bats, you are extending an invitation for bats to stay close to your neighborhood. Place a bat house at a height of at least 10 feet on a structure that faces the morning sun. For more information, visit www.audubonathome.org/bats.

It's a Butterfly!

Butterflies are among the most striking and beautiful of our pollinators. To thrive, they need plants at every stage of their life:

- A recognizable plant on which to lay eggs
- A food source for caterpillars
- Plants for cover
- Nectar-producing flowers for the adults

Some butterfly species are declining due to pesticide use, habitat loss, or varying climate conditions. For more information about which species reside in or migrate through your community, and to learn which plants to provide for them, visit www.audubonathome.org/butterflies.

The Other "B"

Most of the bees that pollinate native plants do not live together in hives. Many of these native solitary bees are declining, but you may be able to help them by building a bee box. Simply drill small holes into an untreated block of wood, or tie a bundle of dried stems together and place them outdoors. Solitary bees will lay their eggs in the holes, which then serve as a nursery. For more information on how to help these beneficial insects, visit www.audubonathome.org/solitarybees.

Working Together

Homeowners and other residents, business owners, environmental organizations, parent-teacher groups, and municipal agencies can form a community or neighborhood wildlife association, or work within existing associations to protect local birds, butterflies, and other wild creatures. By working together, a strong coalition can create a sustainable community and improve public health through environmentally friendly planning, actions, and events.

With a neighborhood habitat group or wildlife association in place, work to create corridors of attractive, healthy, and useful habitat throughout the community. Connect adjacent properties by creating habitat along roads and waterways, and around buildings. Imagine a bird's-eye view of your community that includes ribbons of habitat intertwined with the existing structures, offering a welcoming place for your wild neighbors and allowing them to travel safely. For more information, visit www.audubonathome.org/workingtogether.

Lights Out

Too many lights at night can spell disaster for migrating birds. Large numbers of birds can be attracted by nighttime lights, become disoriented, and fly headlong into tall buildings or other obstacles. Follow the lead of proactive communities such as Chicago, and establish a citywide lights-out policy during migration. For more information, visit www.lightsout.audubon.org.

Healthy Yard Pledge

Create and maintain a healthy environment for you, your family, and local wildlife by pledging to:

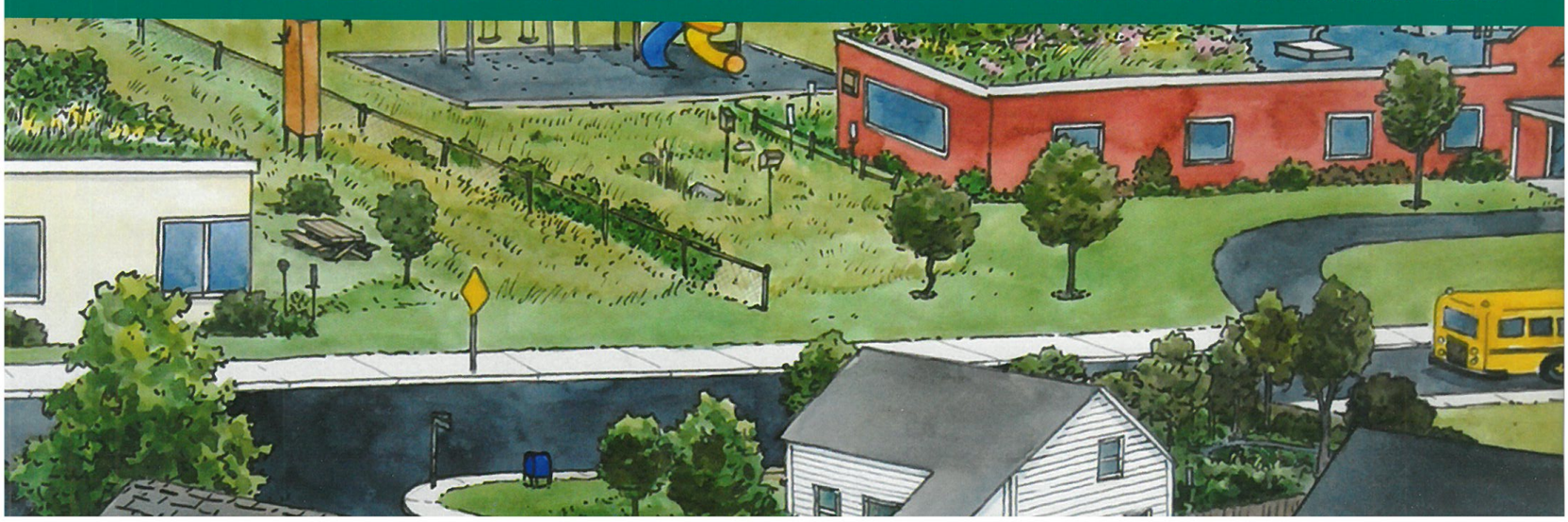
- ✔ Reduce pesticide use
- ✔ Conserve water
- ✔ Protect water quality
- ✔ Remove invasive exotic plants
- ✔ Plant native species
- ✔ Support wildlife on your property

Visit www.audubonathome.org/pledge to make the pledge online.

The **Audubon At Home** website contains information and downloadable resources to help you plan and develop your property in a wildlife-friendly way. You'll find regional resources and information about the birds, other wildlife, and native plants in your area. Visit www.audubonathome.org.

NRCS's Backyard Conservation website also shows ways to help the environment and to make your yard more attractive and enjoyable. Visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard.

An Invitation to a Healthy Neighborhood



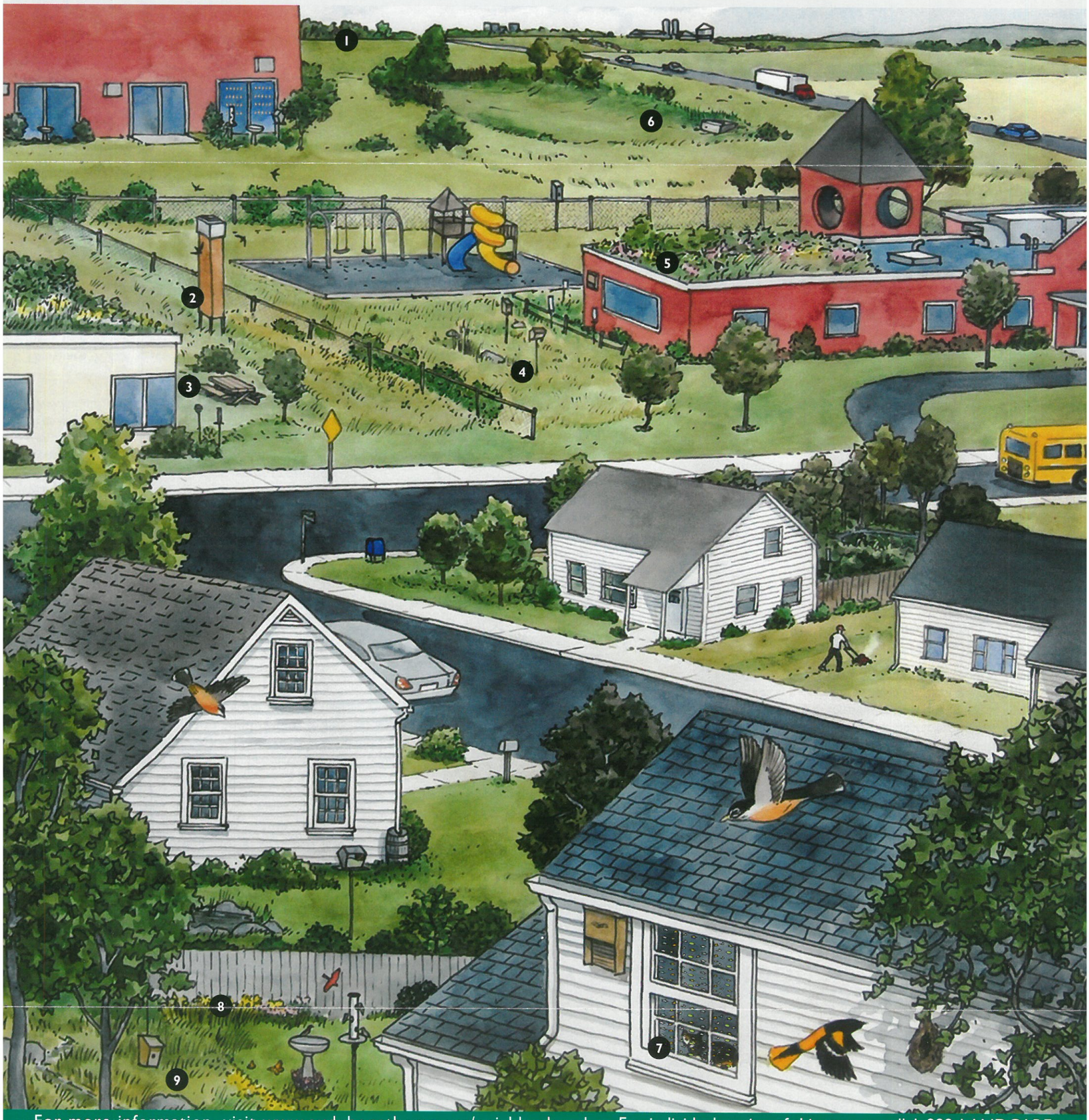
Invite Birds, Bats, and Butterflies to YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

1. Isolated patches of **NATURAL HABITAT** (woodlands, prairies, waterways, desert, etc.) can be restored and protected. Adjacent properties planted to mimic these areas can link isolated patches, and expand the neighborhood's ability to support birds and beneficial wildlife.

2. With the clearing of hollow trees and the capping of chimneys, Chimney Swifts are losing preferred places to nest and roost. Attractive **CHIMNEY SWIFT TOWERS** can house these high-flying insectivores and, when used to post information, can even serve as community nature kiosks.

3. **COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES** are often paved over or surrounded by expansive lawns—providing only limited opportunities for birds and other wildlife. By landscaping with native plants, these tracts of land can become vital contributors to a community's overall environmental health.

4. Wildlife-friendly practices can be implemented on a larger scale in a **SCHOOLYARD.** Incorporation of these elements reinforces similar residential efforts and generates teaching opportunities on school grounds.



For more information, visit www.audubonathome.org/neighborhood • For individual copies of this poster, call 1-888-LANDCARE.

5. Why not turn the barren roof space of neighborhood buildings into attractive green hilltops? **ROOFTOP GARDENS** save energy by insulating building interiors, reduce runoff, last longer than conventional roofs, and provide resources for birds, butterflies, and other beneficial insects.

6. Water **DETENTION BASINS** in housing and commercial developments can support wildlife while protecting water quality in rivers and streams.

7. A community-wide effort to keep **CATS** indoors will keep cats safe and healthy while protecting native birds.

8. Butterflies enhance neighborhoods with their beauty, and are also important in their role as pollinators. Plant gardens with **NATIVE WILDFLOWERS** to feed butterflies and to provide host plants for their eggs and caterpillars.

9. **RESIDENTIAL YARDS** are the ideal place for bird feeders, bird and bat houses, sources of water, and a habitat garden. Collisions with windows kill millions of birds each year; decorate the outside of windows so that birds can see and avoid them, or put up netting as a barrier.

BIRDS TO HELP IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

In creating a habitat plan for your neighborhood, consider providing food, shelter, and nesting requirements for five or six bird species that need the most help in your part of the country. Together with your neighbors, keep track of how these birds respond to your efforts. To determine which species near you need the most help, and to find ways to support them in your neighborhood, visit www.audubonathome.org/birdstohelp.

My target species	Action points

ILLUSTRATION BY RICK BROWN