

The Massachusetts Audubon Society's



*Legislative
Report Card
1990*



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January 1991

Since 1985, the Massachusetts Audubon Society has rated the environmental voting records of state legislators. Each year, the results of our tally are eagerly anticipated by some and dreaded by others. Because of the law of averages and the absence of a pro-environment consensus on Beacon Hill, not all legislators can receive a good score. Those who fall short often make their disappointment known.

Massachusetts Audubon balances these complaints against the satisfaction we receive from recognizing those who work to protect our environment. Most importantly, we are braced by the knowledge that if we did not rate legislative performance, the public would lack an important tool for evaluating its representatives.

Our comprehensive look at roll calls for this report card began on December 1, 1989 and ended on December 1, 1990. The deadline is determined by the publishing date of the *Massachusetts Political Almanac*, which has printed our ratings since we began compiling them. As a result, one House vote on the endangered species bill could not be included for 1990. Some Senate roll calls on California emissions standards also occurred too late to be included in this tally, leaving us without enough roll calls to produce a Senate evaluation.

As you review our scorecard, remember that 1990 was the year when we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day and the beginning of a "green decade." The legislature responded to popular environmental concerns by passing the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, restoring the rights of conservation commissioners to inspect for wetlands violations, and adopting the best automotive emissions limits in the country. Yet, the year also had its disappointments, most notably the political maneuvers that sank a major proposal to protect the Quabbin, Wachusett and Ware River watersheds.

1991 brings an altered political landscape with a new legislature and a new administration. Yet, we can promise that some things will not change. Massachusetts Audubon will continue to push an environmental agenda, and we will publish another legislative report card.

Gerard A. Bertrand
President