

What's the Difference?

Distinguishing Audubon programs for established golf courses from programs for new developments

EDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB, NJ



Golf courses across the United States and in 26 countries around the world are protecting and improving the environment with help from Audubon International programs. But when official names of our programs are abbreviated from “The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses” and “The Audubon Signature Programs” to simply “The Audubon Program,” as they often are in the media and among members, confusion can arise. *Who's doing what? What's required? What's the difference?*

To set things straight, we've developed this simple reference (chart at right) comparing the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses with the Audubon Signature Programs. We hope it answers your questions and helps you encourage your colleagues at established golf courses and at courses to be developed to participate.

Membership in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System and Audubon Signature Programs is not limited to golf courses. Audubon International also works with others types of property owners and managers through its programs for corporate and business properties, cemeteries, schools, residential communities, resorts, and individual homeowners. These programs aim to educate, assist, and inspire millions of people from all walks of life to improve and sustain the land, water, wildlife, and natural resources around them.



Top: The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses offers information and assistance to *established golf courses*. By implementing and documenting a full complement of environmental management practices, a course earns designation as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

Left: Golf courses that are *to be developed* receive assistance with environmental planning and sustainable development by joining Audubon Signature Programs. Audubon International is involved from the planning phase through construction and ongoing management once the course is open. Here, Golf Course Architect Ken Ezell (right), looks over the installation of drainage on a green at Villages of Sumter in Florida.

	AUDUBON COOPERATIVE SANCTUARY PROGRAM FOR GOLF COURSES (ACSP)	AUDUBON SIGNATURE PROGRAMS
What's the program?	The ACSP for Golf Courses is an education and certification program that promotes ecologically-sound land management and the conservation of natural resources on <i>established golf courses</i> . Participation is designed to help course personnel plan, organize, implement, and document a comprehensive environmental management program and receive recognition for their efforts.	The Audubon Signature Programs are education and certification programs that provide comprehensive environmental planning assistance to <i>new developments</i> , including golf courses. The programs assist owners and developers in applying sound environmental conservation and sustainable development practices while planning, designing, building, and managing the development.
Who can join?	Existing golf courses	Proposed projects, including golf courses, in the design or development stages
Are there different program levels?	No.	Yes: Bronze; Silver; and Gold Sustainable Development.
What program materials do new members receive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Guide to Environmental Stewardship on the Golf Course</i> • Certification Handbook • One-year subscription to <i>Stewardship News</i> • Membership art print and certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature Program Handbook • Landscape Restoration Handbook • One-year subscription to <i>Stewardship News</i>
What staff services are provided?	Audubon International staff are available for consultation via telephone and e-mail. Staff review requests for certification and discuss plans and projects with golf course personnel as the course progresses toward certification.	Audubon International (AI) staff are available for consultation via telephone and e-mail. Staff review routing plans, drainage, irrigation, habitat protection, and more as specified in the Natural Resource Management Plan. Bronze members develop this plan themselves, while AI staff write the plan for members at the Silver level. An Environmental Master Plan is prepared by AI for Gold members.
Are site visits included in membership?	No. Site visits are available on a fee-for-service basis.	Yes. Bronze members receive three site visits; Silver receive five to seven; and Gold members receive 16 to 20 site visits.
What is required for certification?	Courses must provide written and photographic documentation of meeting environmental management standards in six areas: Environmental Planning, Wildlife and Habitat Management, Water Conservation, Water Quality Management, Chemical Use Reduction and Safety, and Outreach and Education.	Courses must meet program minimum requirements, including monthly progress reports, the development and implementation of a <i>Natural Resource Management Plan</i> , and the construction of a maintenance facility based on program guidelines. Certification is subject to passing a final on-site audit.
Is there a requirement for re-certification?	Yes. Certified courses submit documentation every two years to show that they are continuing to meet program standards.	Yes. All Certified members submit an annual report and Silver and Gold members are re-audited with an on-site visit annually. Bronze members are re-audited every two years.
How much does it cost to register?	\$150 each year (U.S.) \$200 each year (International)	\$9,500 (Gold and Silver levels) \$12,500 (Bronze level) \$500/year renewable membership fee after the first year
Are there additional fees?	No. The program is designed to protect the environment using low or no cost management practices; capital improvements for infrastructure upgrades are not mandated.	Yes. Travel expenses for site visits, and expenses for environmental planning services are not included in the registration fee. Minimum standards for infrastructure (e.g., maintenance facility, irrigation system, wash pad) are required for certification.
If I drop out of the program, can I rejoin?	Yes.	No. Once a golf course has been released from the program for whatever reason, it is no longer eligible for membership.