



# National Audubon Society

**NONPROFIT;**  
**NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

**Topic:**

*Collaboration  
Sustainability*

**Application:**

*Open Office  
Private Office*

**Project Scope:**

*100 occupants; 111 workstations;  
27,500 square feet*

**Herman Miller Product:**

*My Studio Environments™  
Vivo® Interiors  
Celle® Chairs  
Eames® Aluminum Group Chairs  
Eames Molded Plastic Chairs*

**Year Completed:**

*2007*



In a move to a new space, the National Audubon Society was determined to bring staff together in a collaborative and very green environment. Audubon achieved that goal in an open, loft-like space furnished with My Studio Environments, Celle chairs, and glass M-Wall product with Vivo components for enclosed offices. It also achieved the highest point total for any LEED Platinum-certified commercial interior in the world.



In the early 1990s, the National Audubon Society outfitted and occupied one of the first “green” buildings in New York City, although at the time the nine-story Audubon House was a traditional blend of private offices and Herman Miller Ethospace workstations.

In recent years, however, Audubon's operations have become more decentralized. As staff moved into field offices throughout the U.S, the number of employees at the headquarters location shrank by 30 percent. Unoccupied floors were leased to tenants, and staff were spread over multiple floors and were further isolated within offices and high-walled workstations.

So, Audubon embarked on an exhaustive search for a leased space that would bring its staff together and help redefine its culture. “We wanted to fit our people on one floor, reduce the walls that separated us, increase collaboration, and derive a sense of energy from that,” says Ken Hamilton, vice president, Property and Facilities Management.

Again, Audubon was committed to creating a highly sustainable interior. “We all dove in from day one,” says Guy Geier, senior partner, FXFOWLE Architects. “Every decision was referred back to the LEED scorecard to see how it would affect points, and we stuck to it all the way through the process.” For example, a raised floor that delivers heating and cooling as well as power and data was constructed of recycled material, creating a highly flexible and efficient infrastructure. Low-flow water systems, energy-saving light fixtures (and lots of daylight), and careful choice of materials for renewable or recycled content were all the result of that daily diligence.

In the end, the “happy confluence of a cooperative landlord, an enthusiastic contractor, and a very helpful architect,” according to Mr. Hamilton, enabled the new Audubon headquarters to achieve the highest point total for any LEED Platinum-certified commercial interior in the world.

The new National Audubon Society headquarters is located in a building with high ceilings and large windows in the historic West Village neighborhood. And again, Audubon chose Herman Miller to furnish its new workspace, although this time in the decidedly less traditional My Studio Environments. With both Cradle to Cradle<sup>SM</sup> and GREENGUARD<sup>®</sup> certification, My Studio Environments contributed to Audubon's ever-present LEED scorecard. Its translucency allows daylight to permeate the space, and its light architecture punctuates the spare, open environment. “The interior is clean and uncluttered, so the furniture divides

[Left] My Studio Environments with sliding doors creates a sense of privacy for those moving from enclosed offices to open plan workstations while supporting collaboration and allowing light to permeate the space.

[Right] Consistent with the light-filled environment, a glass-enclosed office seems to float in the Audubon interior. M-Wall product encloses space without blocking light or the visual landscape. A Vivo work wall offers efficient function with a clean aesthetic.



the space and adds a complementary design element to the building architecture," says Suzette Rhodes, Herman Miller A+D representative.

My Studio Environments also offered a soft landing for Audubon's move out of private offices and high-walled workstations. It packs a high degree of function within a small footprint and yet retains a sense of spaciousness. It offers the potential for collaboration as well as the option for privacy. "We tried to design the most ergonomic, bright, and efficient place to work," says Mr. Hamilton, "particularly for those who were leaving private offices. My Studio provided that."

Even the enclosed offices are hardly enclosed, since they are clear glass boxes made of M-Wall product with Vivo components hung on a work wall. The glass M-Wall was manufactured in Connecticut, contributing to Audubon's LEED point total for product manufactured within 500 miles. Celle task chairs and a smattering of Eames Aluminum Group and Molded Plastic chairs also furnish the space.

In the end, the new Audubon headquarters is light-filled and collaborative. Staff converse with one another rather than using e-mail, and people mingle informally as they walk across the office, resulting in a more efficient sharing of resources and information. "There's more energy here; there are more people; it's brighter by far. People are happier than they thought they'd be," says Mr. Hamilton. "This has been a sea change in the way we work."

Audubon was able to achieve this high level of function and aesthetics, along with an unprecedented level of environmental stewardship, all within its budget. "Most importantly, what we've done here is a model of cost-effective sustainability that can be replicated by others," says John Flicker, Audubon president.

*Architect: FXFOWLE Architects (New York and Dubai)*

*Photography by: David Sundberg/Esto*

[Left] Made in nearby Connecticut, this glass M-Wall product contributed to Audubon's LEED points for product manufactured within 500 miles. Celle and Eames Molded Plastic chairs blend comfort with style and affordability.

[Right] My Studio Environments in two heights offers efficient function with varying levels of privacy. My Studio provides ample work surface space and storage within easy ergonomic reach in less square footage than Audubon's former enclosed offices.

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