

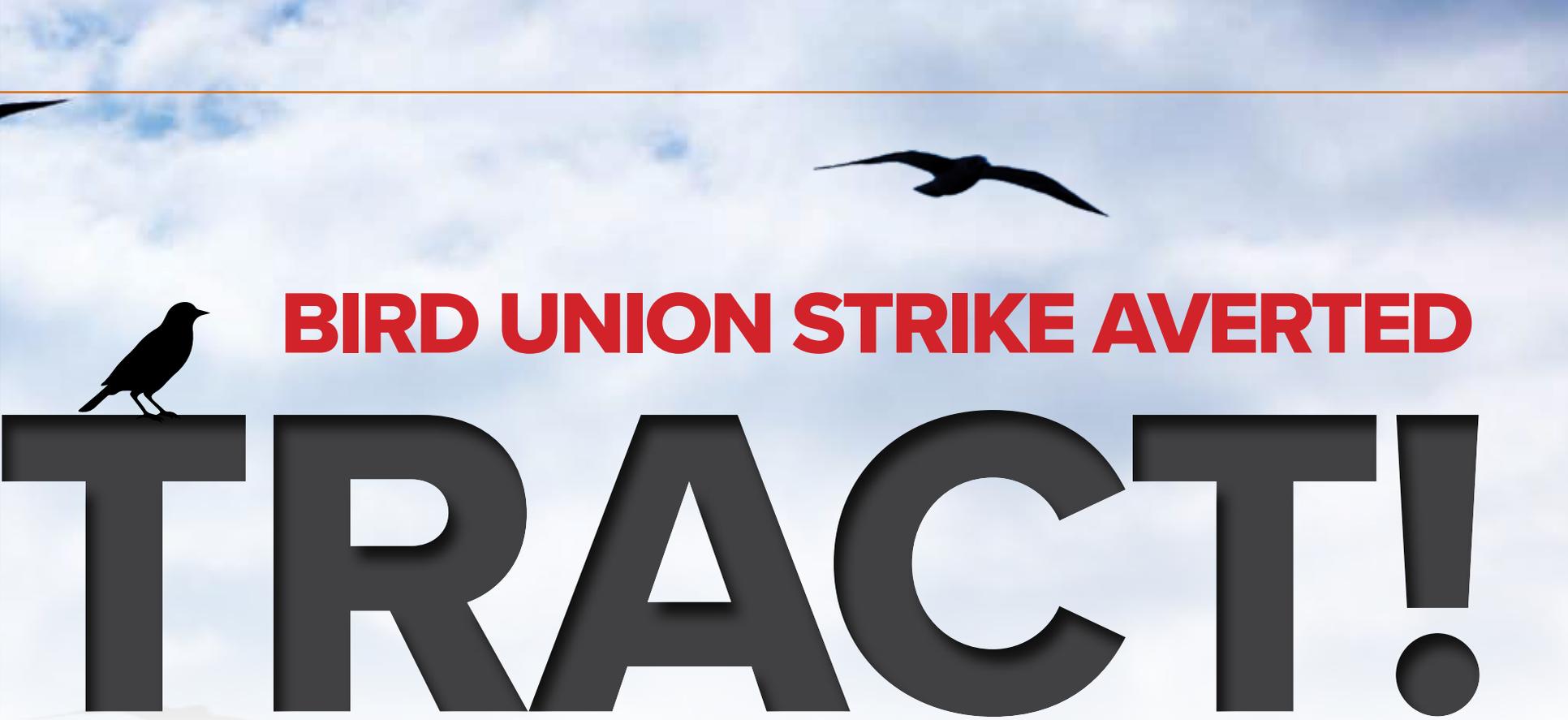


WE GOT A CON



Photo courtesy of Sean Mackell

◀ Christopher Thomas, Local 1180 Private Sector Staff Rep who worked to secure the final contract: "Our Bird Union members put up a great fight and it paid off."



BIRD UNION STRIKE AVERTED

TRACT!

It took two-and-a-half years, strategic bargaining, mobilizing, and organizing, dozens of union actions, an untold number of meetings, a practice picket, and the threat of a strike to finally get Audubon management to negotiate in good faith, but it all paid off on Friday, Sept. 6 when Local 1180 members at the Bird Union secured a contract deal.

The 260 bargaining unit members, which voted to strike in August, unanimously ratified their first union contract with the National Audubon Society on Sept. 20.

Members made significant progress on fair compensation, winning their first guaranteed, across-the-board raises — raises that have been shown to improve pay equity, an important goal for Bird Union members who will be receiving their retro pay in October for 2023 increases that management had been holding hostage.

The agreement contains 3% annual increases, which management had been fighting CWA on for more than a year, as well as up to an additional 4% in merit depending on members' performance evaluations (up to 7% total). This means that over the course of the contract, members will receive raises of more than 10%. The Bargaining Committee also secured for members a guaranteed bonus of \$3,450 during the life of the contract to assist with health care deductibles and premiums.

Other significant wins include 12 fully paid weeks of parental leave for those who have been with the company for more than a year regardless of what state the member lives in; severance to any remote or hybrid worker who decides to leave the organization instead of return to the office on a full-time basis or

relocate when asked; protections for staff in terms of safety equipment and reimbursement for protective gear; acting and covering pay for staff who take on the work of their colleagues or supervisors temporarily; summer Fridays that allow members to take every other Friday off within certain periods of the year, or take them off in the following two quarters if they were unable to use them in the set timeframe; and just cause for all disciplines and a voice at the table via the labor-management committee to continue addressing workplace issues during the three years that the contract will be in place.

“We are incredibly proud of our fellow CWA 1180-Bird Union members and their solidarity that has sustained us through more than two years of negotiations,” said the Bargaining Committee in a joint statement. “For every member who has walked a practice picket line, spoken out for the contract they deserved, or joined their coworkers for a union action: you built this. In negotiating and organizing for a first contract, our members have built a foundation for the future of all Audubon workers to have a voice on the job.”

Soncey Kondrotis, a member of the CWA Local 1180-Bird Union and Audubon employee, said that members have been waiting a long time for the benefits and protections that this contract provides.

“We will finally see raises, bonuses, and wage leveling that has been promised for years — money that people have needed in these years we have been bargaining. Through the process of forming our union and negotiating our contract, I have had the opportunity to meet some of the great people we

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