

# BIRDCONSERVATION

The Magazine of American Bird Conservancy

Winter 2014-2015



CELEBRATING  
**20 YEARS**  
of BIRD CONSERVATION

# What's Past is Prologue

*Like the great baseball pitcher, Satchel Paige, we don't believe in looking back too much here at ABC; there is just too much happening in the present. However, every 20 years or so, we should take a moment to celebrate our successes, reflect on what we have learned, and use that knowledge to move forward. Oh, and, just in case, to see whether "something might be gaining on [us]." So, this issue of Bird Conservation is dedicated to celebrating a few of ABC's successes through its formative years. Enjoy!*

As for reflecting on what we have learned, we do that every day—and we act on those reflections. That is why you can count on ABC to continue succeeding: getting the right birds protected at the right places and the right prices; protecting and restoring habitat based on today's best ecological knowledge; effectively reducing avoidable threats to birds; and building the movement for "bringing back the birds." If you like our first 20 years, then I suggest you tighten your seat belts and join us to see what we do in the next 20: There is no quit in ABC and we fear no challenge in bird conservation!

As I look back, I see that something is gaining on us, though: growing human indifference to the natural environment. Our bird habitat base is reduced in the north and the south of our migrants' ranges. Many species' populations have shrunk. Whole new threats have arisen such as a new class of highly toxic pesticides, new land-gobbling forms of energy production, reduced regulatory protections,



When ABC was founded, only a few dozen Lear's Macaws were left in the wild. Working with our Brazilian partner Fundação Biodiversitas and other groups, ABC helped to pull this species back from the brink. Today, hundreds of Lear's Macaws can be seen in northern Bahia, Brazil—the bird's only home.  
*Photo by Ciro Albano*

and exploding populations of damaging introduced species. Climate change is forcing society to re-evaluate its priorities. And long-reliable conservation organizations have subtly altered course from safeguarding wildlife to conserving nature for man's benefit.

Increasingly, friends wring their hands over this litany of environmental problems. Some tell me that they feel like giving up—but that isn't going to happen here at ABC. After all, when Shakespeare wrote, "what's past is prologue," he was not saying that we are doomed to continue making the same mistakes. He was saying that all we have accomplished before has positioned us perfectly to take on the challenges ahead.

These 20 years at ABC tell us that fearlessness and persistence pay off. We can see the positive results of our efforts. The faint of heart may fall away, but ABC is ratcheting up, and we are doing what it takes to bring back the birds. Thank you for your important part in our effort.



*George*  
George H. Fenwick  
President, ABC



ABC is the Western Hemisphere's bird conservation specialist—the only organization with a single and steadfast commitment to achieving conservation results for native wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas.

A copy of the current financial statement and registration filed by the organization may be obtained by contacting: ABC, P.O. Box 249, The Plains, VA 20198. Tel: (540) 253-5780, or by contacting the following state agencies:

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Winter 2014-2015

# BIRD CONSERVATION

## Twentieth Anniversary Issue

- 6 20 Years of Results for Birds
- 7 Milestones in ABC History
- 29 Thanks to Our Supporters

## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Bird's Eye View
- 4 On the Wire
- 30 Final Glimpse

White-bellied Cincloides by Luke Seitz



Top photo: Red Knots by Ralph Wright,  
Above: Allen's Hummingbird by Glenn Price, Shutterstock



Hear from ABC staff members about their favorite success stories through the years: [youtube.com/user/abcbirds](https://www.youtube.com/user/abcbirds)





## First Predator-proof Fence on Kaua'i Completed

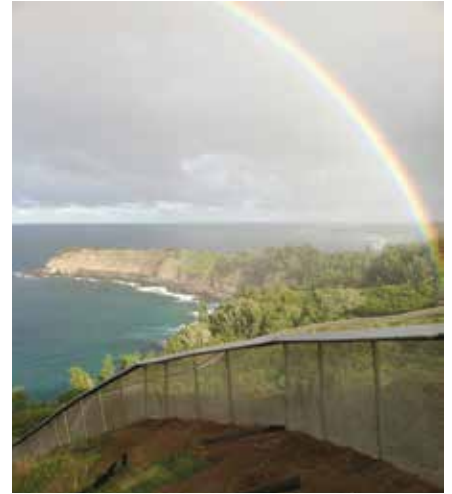
Native plant and animal communities that have inhabited a roughly eight-acre area at the Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge—including endangered bird species—will be protected from predators thanks to the completed installation of a 6.5-foot tall predator-proof fence that stretches almost a half-mile in length.

The effort is the result of a collaboration that includes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Kaua'i National Wildlife Refuge Complex, ABC, Pacific Rim Conservation, and the Kaua'i Endangered Seabird Recovery Project. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Lynn and Stuart White, and the Martin Foundation provided critical funding support.

The fence will keep introduced mammalian predators, including cats, dogs, rats, and mice, out of the area so that native species such as the endangered Nēnē (Hawaiian Goose), the Laysan Albatross, and rare plants can flourish again in a protected environment. Work will soon begin to humanely remove non-native predators from the area.

This type of fencing has been used on the island of O'ahu at Ka'ena Point, where predator exclusion resulted in record numbers of seabird chicks fledging in the year immediately following the project's completion.

Plans are underway to establish a new colony of the threatened Newell's



The completed fence on Kaua'i. Photo by Jessica Behnke

Shearwater within the Kilauea fence by translocating chicks there from their montane nesting areas, starting in 2015.

## EPA Review: Pesticides Deadly to Birds and Bees Found Ineffective Against Pests

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed a review of the use of neonicotinoids, or "neonics"—the world's most widely used class of pesticides—as a seed coating on U.S. soybean crops. The finding? Neonics "may not be

currently providing any actual pest management benefits," according to an October 15 EPA memorandum.

Neonics have been linked to serious impacts to birds, bees, and other wildlife. For example, ABC's 100-page report published in 2013, "The Impact of the Nation's Most Widely Used Insecticides on Birds," found that a single seed treated with neonics can kill a songbird. ABC is calling for a moratorium on the use of the pesticides pending independent review of their effects on birds, bees, and other wildlife.

The substances are now ubiquitous in products as diverse as seed treatments, home and garden products, and flea ointments for pets.

"The EPA review confirms what we have been telling the agency all year: that despite the enormous scale on which they're used, the neonic seed coatings are not increasing agricultural yields," said Cynthia Palmer, Director of Pesticides Science and Regulation. Scientific studies on corn, canola, and other crops show similar results.

"The farmers pay for the costly treated seeds; the bee-keepers bring home dead hives; and the birds, butterflies, and other wildlife die," Palmer said. "The only benefit is to Monsanto, Syngenta, and Bayer, which accrue enormous profits."

The review was conducted as part of the EPA's re-registration process for neonics, which includes analysis of the pesticides' impact to nontarget species.



Grasshopper Sparrow by Steve Byland, Shutterstock

# Rare Birds... Threatened Places... REWARDING CHALLENGES

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This fall, we're gratified to report that ABC and our in-country partners have protected habitat for nearly half of the Americas' rarest birds—like Blue-billed Curassow, Bay-breasted Cuckoo, and Stresemann's Bristlefront, a bird so rare that few photos even exist.

But time is running out for the others. Thirty-four of the 63 rarest birds, designated Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) species, in the Americas still have no special protection. Can you help us cross the halfway mark and ensure a future for more of the "rarest of the rare?"

Right now, you can double the value of your contribution. Thanks to a challenge match, every gift ABC receives between now and December 31 will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$150,000. Help us meet this challenge and donate today!



Please use the enclosed envelope or  
donate online at: [support.abcbirds.org/  
RewardingChallenges](https://support.abcbirds.org/RewardingChallenges)

Blue-billed Curassow  
by Fundación ProAves

# 20 YEARS OF RESULTS FOR BIRDS

From the beginning, **American Bird Conservancy has been fearless**. We have taken on the biggest issues affecting birds, even when those efforts were controversial.

We have been **unwavering in our commitment** to safeguard birds, even while other groups shifted their mission to prioritize people over wildlife. We have **built networks of partners across the Americas**, making the success and sustainability of our in-country partners one of our top priorities.

**And our approach has paid off**: We're proud to share this timeline, featuring a few notable milestones from our 20 years—results that were made possible with the support of donors and members like you.

## ABC RESULTS AT A GLANCE

**3.5 million** trees and shrubs planted to enhance and restore habitat

**993,731** acres protected

**65** international bird reserves created

**2,100+** of 4,415 bird species in the Americas benefited from ABC's work

**800+** organizations engaged as partners across the Americas





# MILESTONES IN ABC HISTORY



**ABC is Hatched:** ABC is founded in Washington, DC, with the small but feisty hummingbird, such as the **Ruby-throated (pictured)**, chosen as the group's symbol. *Photo by Joshua Clark*



President **George Fenwick (pictured)** charts a course to help make the whole of bird conservation greater than the sum of its parts. Today, ABC is known for its partnership-based approach to

conservation and consistent delivery of bird conservation results across the Americas. *Photo by Rita Fenwick, November 1994*



**Critical Sites Identified:** ABC created the Globally Important Bird Areas (IBA) program in the United States, designating Arizona's San Pedro National Riparian Conservation Area as the first American IBA. The area provides habitat for the western population of the **Yellow-billed Cuckoo (pictured)**, which is now rare in the West. *Photo by Ed Schneider*



**<< Nation's First IBA: The San Pedro National Riparian Conservation Area (pictured)** provides stopover and feeding habitat for between three and five million migrating songbirds each spring, and shelters important breeding populations of Green Kingfishers and Grey Hawks.

This type of desert riparian ecosystem is a rare remnant of what was once an extensive network of similar riparian areas throughout the American Southwest. *Photo by Dan Lebbin, ABC*

1995





**Alliance for All Birds:** When ABC and Partners in Flight—today the country’s largest bird conservation alliance—began developing landscape-level conservation plans for native birds in the United States, they helped expand the scope of state and federal conservation efforts to include nongame birds such as **Wood Thrush (pictured)** and other declining neotropical migrants. That historic change picked up momentum in 2000, when ABC began working closely with the nation’s public-private Joint Venture (JV) programs.

*Photo by Ed Schneider*



**<< Bird Conservation Launched:**

The first issue of *Bird Conservation* magazine was published. Initially a partnership between ABC and Partners in Flight, the magazine is now “the printed face” of ABC.

**Protection for Shrikes:** ABC began an effort that ultimately helped convince the U.S. Navy to expand protective measures for an endangered bird found only on a California island used as a naval target range. Today, the San Clemente Loggerhead Shrike is steadily recovering.





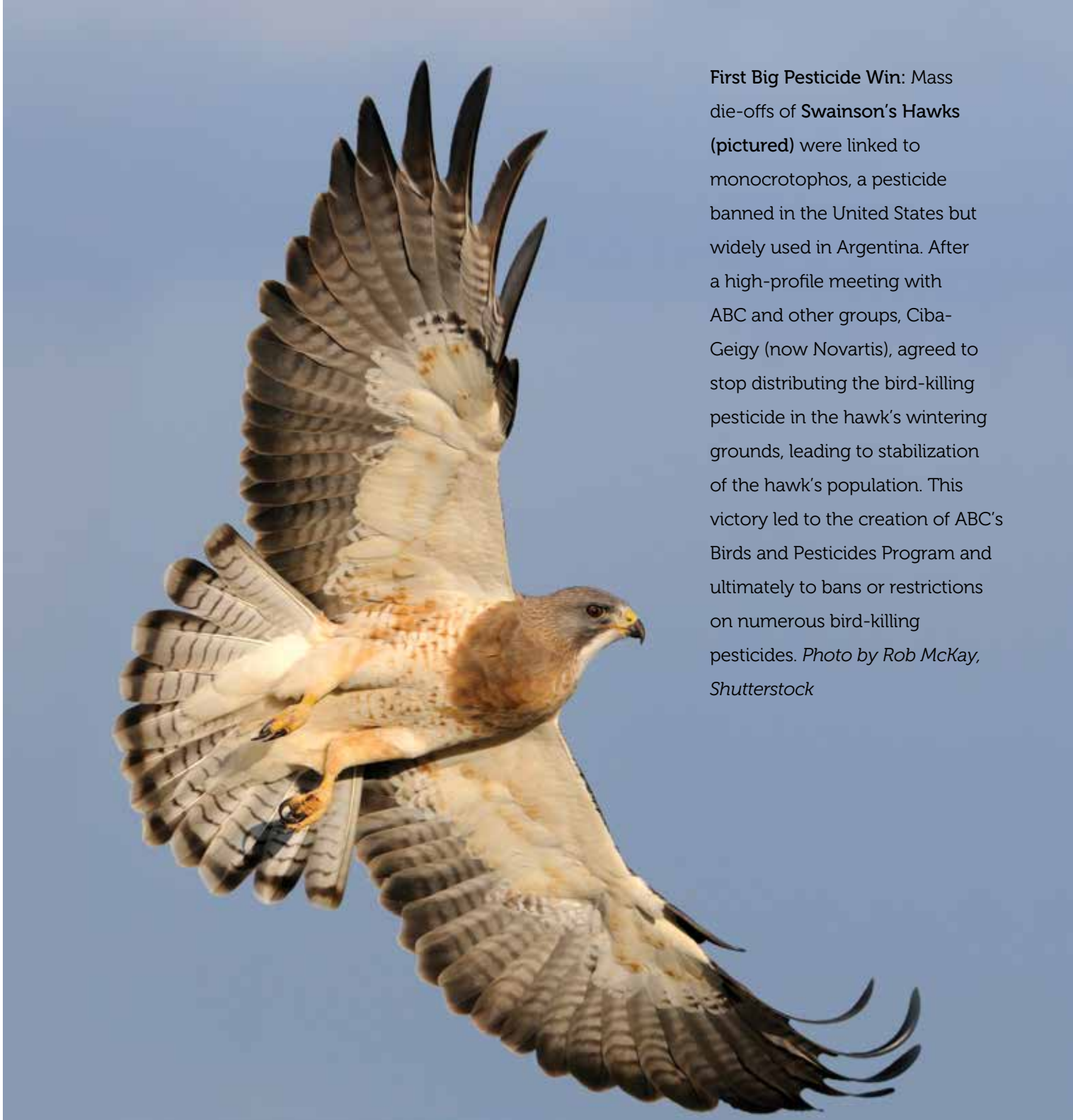
**On-the-Ground Victory:** In western Mexico, a plan to build a logging road through El Carricito Important Bird Area threatened **Military Macaws (pictured)**, Eared Quetzals, and more than 150 other bird species. ABC helped stop the road, launching a collaboration with local group Bosque Antiguo that led over time to protection of more than 900 acres of habitat and to a community agreement to protect 25,000 acres of pine-oak forest considered sacred by the local Huichol people. *Photo by Dyrk Daniels*



**<< Cats Indoors...for Birds, Cats, and People:** With support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, ABC launched its Cats Indoors Program, working to limit the billions of birds killed

every year by feral and free-roaming housecats. The program continues to advance this work, armed with everything from peer-reviewed science to widely aired public service announcements. *Photo by Julia Pivovarova, Shutterstock*





**First Big Pesticide Win:** Mass die-offs of **Swainson's Hawks** (pictured) were linked to monocrotophos, a pesticide banned in the United States but widely used in Argentina. After a high-profile meeting with ABC and other groups, Ciba-Geigy (now Novartis), agreed to stop distributing the bird-killing pesticide in the hawk's wintering grounds, leading to stabilization of the hawk's population. This victory led to the creation of ABC's Birds and Pesticides Program and ultimately to bans or restrictions on numerous bird-killing pesticides. *Photo by Rob McKay, Shutterstock*



**<< Continental Conservation:** ABC helped create the U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), now a 23-member group that unites nonprofit and government groups in bird conservation

efforts and strengthens results for birds across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. *Photo of **Hooded Merganser** by Tom Reichner, Shutterstock*





#### Parrot Recovery in Colombia:

When 81 rare Yellow-eared Parrots (pictured), then widely believed extinct, were discovered in a remote corner of the Colombian Andes, one researcher called it "the find of a lifetime." Since then, ABC has been a staunch supporter of Proyecto Ognorhynchus, an ambitious effort led by Fundación ProAves to protect both the parrots and the wax palm trees on which the birds depend. In 2012, the Yellow-eared Parrot population reached an all-time recorded high of 1,000 birds. *Photo by Francesco Veronesi*



**<< Global Warnings:** Supported by a grant from the EPA, ABC produced one of the first scientific studies to conclude that man-made climate changes impact birds, including **Baltimore Orioles (pictured)**. *Photo by Al Mueller, Shutterstock*

**Taking on Towers:** Work to limit bird kills at communication towers began. With support from Jeff and Connie Woodman and Wolf Creek Foundation, ABC's steady pressure led to a 2012 agreement with owners to light towers in ways that reduce mortality.

# 1999



**Rays of Hope for Red Knots:** The outlook for a great migratory spectacle brightened when the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council limited fishing for the horseshoe crabs that spawn by the millions in Delaware Bay each spring, just as flocks of starving *rufa* Red Knots (pictured) arrive to devour them. The restrictions are among the first of many actions ABC pushed for on behalf of the rapidly declining subspecies, including establishment of a crab sanctuary and restrictions on crab collection. These efforts were made possible by supporters including the Leo Model Foundation and the Barkley Fund. *Photo by Eric C. Reuter*



**<< The Colony and the Court:** ABC and others obtained a court order to block a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' plan to move the world's largest colony of Caspian Terns, located near the mouth of the Columbia River. New breeding sites were eventually created. *Photo by Tom Grey*

**Saving Sombrero Island:** Objections raised by ABC helped convince Beal Aerospace to cancel plans to build a rocket-launching facility at a seabird rookery on Sombrero Island, Anguilla, home to rare seabirds such as Masked Boobies.



**Saving Seabirds:** ABC's new Seabirds Program began finding solutions to the bycatch problems that threaten the world's 22 albatross species, including **Black-footed Albatross (pictured)** and many other seabirds. In Hawaiian and Alaskan fisheries, bird-friendly fishing methods advocated by ABC and others helped reduce seabird bycatch by 90 percent. Later, ABC assisted when Argentina and Chile developed national plans of action to conserve seabirds affected by their fisheries, and has helped remove invasive rats, cats, and other non-native species from key breeding islands. *Photo by bikeriderlondon, Shutterstock*



**<< "Good Fortune" in Ecuador:**

A major grant from ABC allowed Fundación Jocotoco to add 1,000 acres to the Buenaventura cloud forest reserve in southern Ecuador, protecting important populations of

**El Oro Parakeets (pictured), Bearded Guans, and Pacific Royal Flycatchers.**

*Photo by Dušan M. Brinkhuizen*



**No Extinction Allowed:** The Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE), launched in 2000 and chaired by ABC, continues to rapidly expand, becoming a global alliance that identifies and seeks protection for species reduced to extremely small populations, often in a single site. Seventy-eight of the 200 global AZE birds are found in the Americas, including the **Maui Parrotbill (pictured)**, Whooping Crane, and Blue-billed Curassow. The support of the Weeden Foundation was crucial in establishing AZE. *Photo by Robby Kohley*



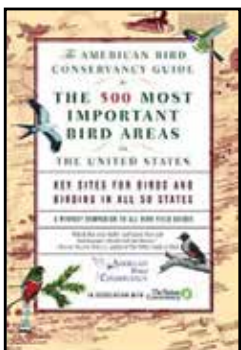
**<< Restoring Ponderosa Pines:** In Montana and Idaho, ABC and partner groups began restoring once-vast ponderosa pine forests used by **White-headed Woodpeckers (pictured)**, Lewis's

Woodpeckers, and Flammulated Owls, with the help of funding provided by the National Forest Foundation and other groups. *Photo by Greg Homel, Natural Elements Productions*



**A Place for the Curassow:** In Colombia's Magdalena River Valley, ABC and Fundación ProAves launched an effort to protect a lowland forest harboring more than 330 bird species, including the last place on earth for the **Blue-billed Curassow (pictured)** and wintering Cerulean Warblers. The resulting El Paujil Reserve now covers more than 14,000 acres. ABC helped create local outreach programs that reduced hunting of the curassow, which continues to recover.

*Photo by Tom Friedel/VIREO*



<< **Must-Read for All Birders:** ABC and Random House published the *American Bird Conservancy Guide to the 500 Most Important Bird Areas in the United States*. Novelist and nature writer Peter Matthiessen described the book as “a must-read for all

birders that will open their eyes to the critical significance of preserving these areas. The very future of bird populations depends on it.”

2003





#### Advancing Across the Andes:

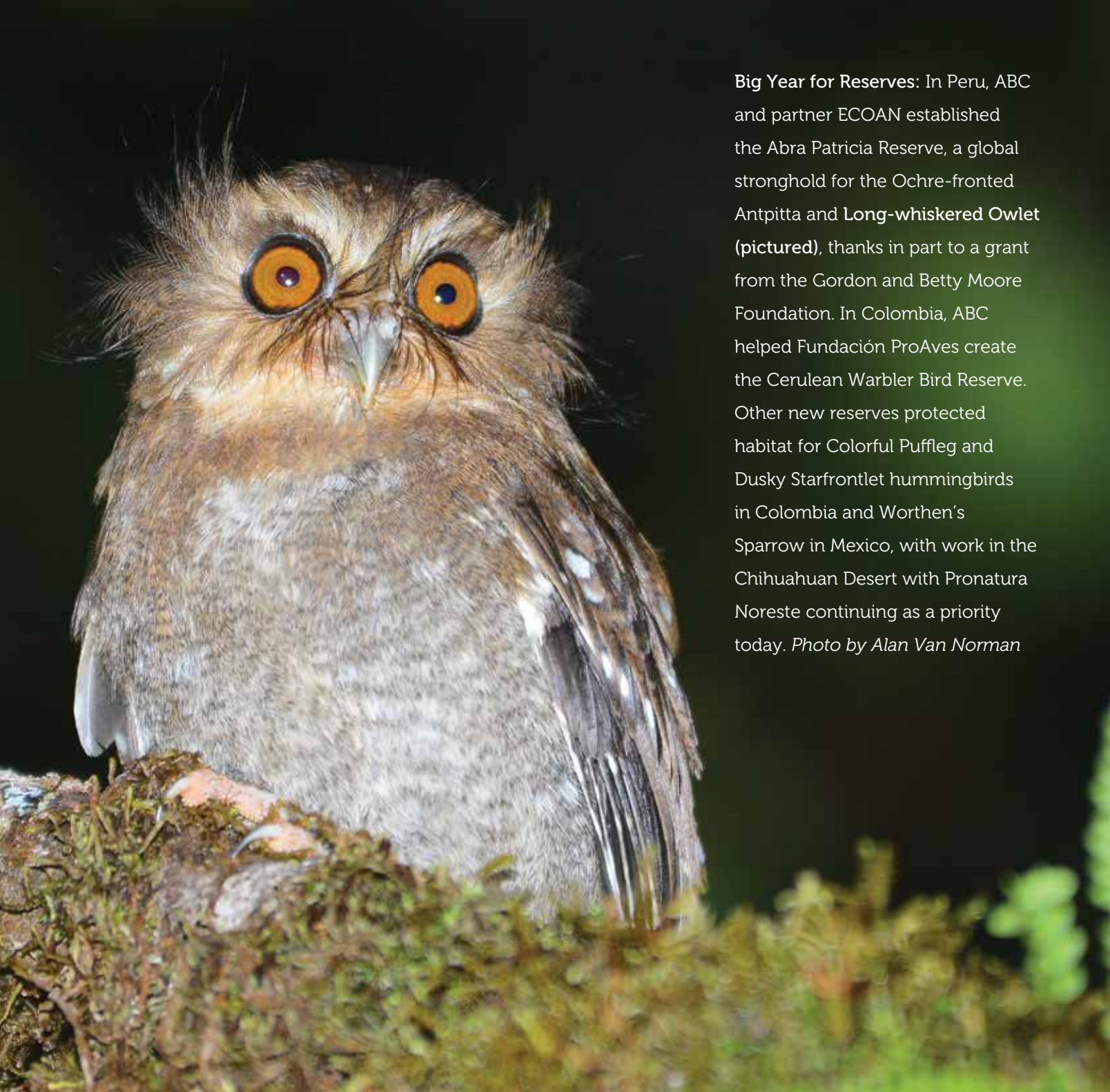
ABC launched its Tropical Andes Program with a major grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, leading to many conservation advances. One resulting success was a significant expansion of the Tapichalaca Reserve in Ecuador, which protected more land occupied by the rare **Jocotoco Antpitta** (pictured), Bearded Guan, and Little Woodstar hummingbird. Another outcome was an Andes-wide effort to expand conservation for high-altitude *Polylepis* forest, benefiting birds such as the Royal Cinclodes. *Photo by Hugo Arnal*



**<< Strengthening Alliances:** ABC helped launch the Bird Conservation Alliance (BCA), a network of more than 200 groups with a shared interest in bird conservation. Formerly known as the Policy

Council, the BCA leverages results for bird conservation issues across the Americas. *Photo of **Bald Eagle** by M. Otto, Shutterstock*





**Big Year for Reserves:** In Peru, ABC and partner ECOAN established the Abra Patricia Reserve, a global stronghold for the Ochre-fronted Antpitta and **Long-whiskered Owlet (pictured)**, thanks in part to a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. In Colombia, ABC helped Fundación ProAves create the Cerulean Warbler Bird Reserve. Other new reserves protected habitat for Colorful Puffleg and Dusky Starfrontlet hummingbirds in Colombia and Worthen's Sparrow in Mexico, with work in the Chihuahuan Desert with Pronatura Noreste continuing as a priority today. *Photo by Alan Van Norman*



**<< Counting Terns:** ABC coordinated with numerous partners on the first comprehensive count of **Interior Least Terns (pictured)**, leading to the discovery that the birds were far more numerous than previously thought.

A 2013 paper on range-wide threats by ABC, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has raised the possibility that the bird will be removed from the Endangered Species list. *Photo by Cliff Collings, Shutterstock*

2005



**Restoring Central Hardwoods:** Working with federal and state agencies and groups like the National Wild Turkey Federation, ABC—a partner in the Central Hardwoods Joint Venture—began restoring habitats for declining birds like Blue-winged Warbler and Prairie Warbler across Arkansas, Missouri, and other states in the nation’s Central Hardwoods region. Among the results: **Diverse, open glades (pictured)** where native plants abound, supporting insects, birds, and other wildlife. *Photo by Susan Drees*



**<< Saving a Marvel:** In northern Peru, ABC and partner ECOAN create the one and only protected area for the rare **Marvelous Spatuletail (pictured)**. The Huembo Reserve is

now a conservation success story and destination for birders all over the world. *Photo by Ian Merrill*





**In Defense of Brazil's Rarest:** Less than 10 percent of Brazil's Atlantic Forest remained when ABC helped partner group Fundação Biodiversitas purchase 1,468 acres of core habitat for the **Stresemann's Bristlefront** (pictured in this rare photograph), a bird now numbering fewer than 15 individuals. Identified as an AZE conservation priority, the reserve is packed with rare species, including White-necked Hawk, Banded Cotinga, and Bahia Spinetail. *Photo by Ciro Albano*



**<< Lead-free Condors in California:** California banned the use of lead bullets by hunters in all or parts of 14 counties, reducing a leading threat to the **California Condor** (pictured). ABC testified in favor of the ban. *Photo by kojihirano, Shutterstock*

**Listing for Hawaiian Birds:** ABC filed a petition urging the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to place two Hawaiian birds—the 'Akeke'e and the 'Akikiki—on the Endangered Species list. In 2010 FWS responded by adding both, along with 45 Hawaiian plant species and one Hawaiian insect.





**Ecotourists Welcome:** ABC ramped up efforts to turn bird reserves—such as the **Buenaventura Reserve in Ecuador (pictured)**—into models of successful ecotourism. Over the years, we supported the development of 12 ecolodges across eight countries. This work is made possible by funding from the Jeniam Foundation and other donors. *Photo by Fundación Jocotoco, October 2014. Shown left to right: park guard Leodan Aguilar, Jocotoco Board President Martin Schaefer, ABC's Benjamin Skolnik, and park guards Leovigildo Cabrera and Baldomiro Becerra.*



**<< Saving Bird Funding:** At the behest of ABC and other groups, the U.S. Congress reauthorized the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the only federal funding source specifically dedicated

to conservation of the Americas' migratory birds such as **Blackburnian Warbler (pictured)**. *Photo by Paul Reeves Photography, Shutterstock*





**Commitment in Extinction Capital:** In partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Hawaii Division of Forestry and Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ABC launched an effort to protect Hawai'i's rapidly declining native birds, such as 'Iiwi (pictured). In the program's first year, ABC and its partners scored an important victory by highlighting Hawai'i in the national "State of the Birds" report, prompting Congress to authorize an additional \$2 million for bird conservation in the islands. *Photo by Robert Dromgoole*



**<< Cuckoos and the Caribbean:** In the Dominican Republic, ABC and Grupo Jaragua helped create the "Reserva Biologica Loma Charco Azul" that harbors rare birds such as the **Bay-breasted Cuckoo (pictured)** and declining migrants like the Cape May Warbler. *Photo by Cesar Abrill*

**Macaw on the Brink:** After ABC helped partner group Fundação Biodiversitas expand a reserve, construct a lodge, and reduce poaching near the Brazilian nesting grounds of the Lear's Macaw, population declines of the nearly extinct bird were reversed.

# 2009



**Forests from the Trees:** ABC helped partner groups and communities plant 2.25 million native trees across key sites in Central and South America as well as Hawai'i, accelerating a reforestation effort begun in 2001. This work helped expand endangered *Polylepis* forests in the **highlands of southern Peru (pictured)**, providing habitat for irreplaceable populations of White-browed Tit-Spinetail and Ash-breasted Tit-Tyrant. To sustain the *Polylepis* work, ABC, Conservation International, and the Peruvian government have created a \$2 million endowment. *Photo by ECOAN*



*Thanks to the Leon Levy Foundation for support of these efforts:*

**<< Bird-Smart Wind:** Taking on a burgeoning threat to birds, ABC launched a national campaign to limit bird kills linked to poorly sited, poorly operated wind energy installations. *Photo from Flickr Creative Commons*

**Roadmap for the Hemisphere:** *The American Bird Conservancy Guide to Bird Conservation* provided a roadmap for ABC and other groups, outlining long-term priorities across the Western Hemisphere.





**Millerbird's New Lease on Life:** The Laysan Millerbird team (pictured) celebrated the translocation of endangered Millerbirds from Nihoa to Laysan in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Today, we have successfully established a second population of Millerbirds on Laysan, where more than 160 individuals are thriving. (Read more on p. 30.) *Photo by Holly Freifeld, September 2011. Shown left to right: George Wallace, ABC; Thierry Work, USGS; Rachel Rounds, USFWS; Michele Kuter, USFWS; Peter Luscomb, consultant; Holly Freifeld (kneeling, arms outstretched), USFWS; Chris Farmer (kneeling, arms upraised), ABC; Robby Kohley, ABC contractor; Cameron Rutt, ABC contractor; Tawn Speetjens (kneeling), USFWS volunteer; Matt Stelmach, USFWS; Lauren Greig, USFWS volunteer.*



**<< Saving Sage Grouse:** A regional conservation initiative on 62 million acres of federal land was created to help declining **Greater Sage-Grouse (pictured)**, thanks in part to the advocacy efforts of ABC and other members of the Bird Conservation Alliance. *Photo by Shutterstock*

**Attention, Beach-goers:** ABC and a host of partners launched the Beach-nesting Birds Program to conserve shorebird habitat in five southern states. Among other successes, the program recorded a near-doubling of Least Tern fledglings in Grand Isle, Louisiana from 2012 to 2013.





#### Mapping Turbine Threats to

**Birds:** ABC unveiled an online map that designates areas of high importance to birds, helping to guide installation of wind turbines and to gauge the threat that proposed facilities pose to **Golden Eagles (pictured)**, Whooping Cranes, and other at-risk birds at more than 2,000 important sites. *Photo by Dave M. Hunt Photography, Shutterstock*



#### << Making Buildings Bird Friendly:

ABC's Glass Collisions Program, launched in 2009, published *Bird-Friendly Building Design*, a guide for architects as well as the general public, intended to reduce the billions

of birds killed by window strikes each year. The guide was made possible through the support of Arnold Glas.





**Stepping Up for Grassland Birds:** Long-billed Curlews (pictured) were among the beneficiaries when ABC and partner groups stepped up efforts across more than 3 million acres of western landscapes to enhance management practices in ways that benefit birds. Partners included the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

*Photo by Marlin Harms*



**<< Exposing Neonics:** A headline-making study led by ABC concluded that neonicotinoids, the world's most widely used group of pesticides, pose major threats to birds, noting that a single treated seed is all it takes to kill a songbird. *Photo of Bobolink by David Watkins, Shutterstock*

**For Blue-throats and Buffies:** ABC and partners helped Asociación Armonía double the size of Bolivia's Barba Azul Nature Reserve, home of the rare but recovering Blue-throated Macaw and stopover site for migrants such as Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

# 2013



**Victory for Raptors:** After years of pressure from ABC and other members of the National Pesticide Reform Coalition, the Reckitt Benckiser company agreed to restrict the sale of super-toxic d-CON rodent poisons, a notorious killer of birds of prey like the **Great Horned Owl (pictured)**. The support of the Wallace Genetic Foundation and the Turner Foundation has been critical to ABC's Birds and Pesticides Program. *Photo by Martha Marks, Shutterstock*



**<< Haven for Hummingbirds:** ABC, Tucson Audubon, and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours led the effort to buy Paton's Birder Haven in Arizona, famed for hummingbirds like **Violet-crowned (pictured)**. Now managed by Tucson Audubon, the site remains a sanctuary. *Photo by Greg Homel*

**Acreage for Andean Condor:** In Ecuador, ABC helped Fundación Jocotoco purchase Hacienda Antisanilla, a spectacularly beautiful 7,000-acre property that protects half of that nation's Andean Condors.





**Bringing Back the Birds:** We will expand one of the most important bird conservation efforts ABC has ever been involved in: a hemispheric push to improve the fortunes of declining migratory species across their vast ranges, including the **Cerulean Warbler (pictured)**. We'll build on the pledge we made at a groundbreaking 2013 Partners in Flight meeting: to raise \$50 million to help "bring back the birds." And we'll do it in collaboration with our many good friends at Partners in Flight and within Joint Venture programs across the United States, all of whom are essential to this work. *Photo by Tessa Nickels*



**<< Reversing a Dramatic Decline:** ABC will intensify efforts to reverse population declines of the **Golden-winged Warbler (pictured)**, bringing more funding and partners to the endeavor. In important breeding areas in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and across the Appalachians, we'll add

to the thousands of acres of "young forests" restored to benefit the species. And in Central and South America, we'll expand our work with partners to protect and connect habitat for wintering warblers.

*Photo by Lynda Goff*

# 2015...and Beyond



# THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the following individuals and organizations whose support has been invaluable in helping us achieve 20 years of remarkable bird conservation results.

Amazon Conservation Association  
Beneficia Foundation  
Bingham Trust  
blue moon fund  
Bobolink Foundation  
Jim and Yuko Brumm  
Warren and Cathy Cooke  
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Dick and Nancy Eales  
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Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
Overhills Foundation  
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# The Fundamental Things Apply

By David S. Wilcove

To fully appreciate the unique and vital role that ABC plays in the conservation world, you should focus first on the Millerbird. Not the California Condor or the Greater Sage-Grouse or even the Western Bluebird (all of which have benefited from ABC's attention), but the little-known Millerbird.

Never a common species, Millerbirds used to occur on Laysan and Nihoa Islands in the northwestern Hawaiian archipelago. The foolish introduction of rabbits to Laysan around 1903 resulted in the near-complete destruction of the island's vegetation and, tragically, the extirpation of the Millerbird (among other species). That left Nihoa as the Millerbird's sole remaining home—a 179-acre nub of volcanic rock in the middle of nowhere. Were anything bad to happen to Nihoa—the introduction of rats from a shipwrecked boat, the arrival of a new disease like West Nile virus, or the spread of an invasive plant that altered the native habitat—the Millerbird could disappear in the blink of an eye.

For years, ornithologists spoke of the necessity of establishing a second population of Millerbirds as an insurance policy against future catastrophes. The logical place to put them would be Laysan, given that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) had long since eliminated the rabbits, allowing the native vegetation to regrow. Yet the idea went nowhere, lost amidst all



Millerbirds are now thriving on Laysan thanks to the successful reintroduction efforts of ABC and partners. Photo by Cameron Rutt

the other conservation problems affecting Hawai'i. Nor did the plight of a little brown bird on a tiny island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean attract much attention from the big conservation organizations.

ABC stepped in and worked tirelessly with dedicated people at the FWS to build support and funding for a Millerbird reintroduction plan. ABC then assisted in 2011 and 2012, helping to move a small number of Nihoa Millerbirds to Laysan. This "insurance" population has been steadily growing, and the Millerbird's

prospects for survival have not been so bright in over a century.

Of course, ABC is not just about endangered species. The organization is also working hard to protect whole landscapes across North America and Latin America for the benefit of birds and people. And ABC has not hesitated to take on a number of deeply contentious issues—feral cats, for example—that most other groups intentionally ignore.

These are increasingly challenging times for conservation. A growing human population is placing unprecedented demands on the earth's ecosystems. Climate change is shifting the ranges of species in ways that defy easy prediction. Some other conservation organizations waffle and worry about their mission. But not ABC. ABC's response to challenges reminds me of the line the piano player Sam so memorably sings in the film *Casablanca*: "The fundamental things apply."

Save endangered species, protect habitats, reduce threats. These are the things ABC has been doing so well for the past 20 years and will continue doing in the future.

On that you can rely.



David S. Wilcove, a professor of ecology, evolutionary biology, and public affairs at Princeton University, is the author of two books and numerous scientific articles on biodiversity conservation. He was part of a small group of people who helped create ABC in 1994 and served on the ABC Board from 1999 until 2005.



Hundreds of species of birds...



Buff-breasted Sandpipers at Bolivia's Barba Azul Reserve.  
*Photo by Daniel Alarcon*

Thousands of acres of habitat...



Barba Azul Reserve. *Photo by Daniel J. Lebbin, ABC*

One legacy of bird conservation – Yours.



Blue-throated Macaws at Barba Azul Reserve.  
*Photo by Daniel Alarcon*

*You can ensure results for the birds of the Americas for years to come by including ABC in your estate plans. If you have already done so, or if you would like more information, please contact ABC Planned Giving Director Jack Morrison at 540-253-5780 or [jmorrison@abcbirds.org](mailto:jmorrison@abcbirds.org).*





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ABC staff at 20th anniversary celebration,  
September 2014. Photo by Aditi Desai, ABC

From all of us at ABC, thank you for your support of bird conservation!

