



Bringing back the birds

Inside Bird Conservation – June 2017

American Bird Conservancy Names Mike Parr New President



Michael J. Parr will be the next President of American Bird Conservancy (ABC). Parr succeeds George Fenwick, who has led ABC since founding the organization in 1994. Currently ABC's Chief Conservation Officer, Parr takes up his new duties June 1.

"It is an enormous honor for me to take on this important role," said Parr. "Bird conservation is my personal mission in life. I have had a wonderful 20 years working with the great staff and Board at ABC

already, and I am looking forward to helping lead the next chapter in the history of this remarkable organization. I'm grateful for the opportunity to build on the tremendous bird conservation legacy of ABC leaders George and Rita Fenwick."

eBird Investigation: Eastern Bewick's Wren in Decline

The Eastern population of the Bewick's Wren has been in decline for decades, and bird conservationists want your help to find out why. Until now, the decline of the Eastern Bewick's Wren has been a mystery. It has variously been thought to result from habitat loss or competition with House Wrens – yet plenty of apparently good habitat still exists. Bewick's Wrens have disappeared from some areas where House Wrens are absent and remained in some Western areas where they are present – so no explanation yet appears to definitively explain the species' disappearance from large parts of the East.

By gathering data on remaining Bewick's Wren populations in Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma, and points east of these states, we hope to discover more about their habitat needs and potential threats to help inform conservation planning for the species. The power of eBird combined with your birding expertise could be the key to unlock this mystery!

Please help us search for Bewick's Wrens in the aforementioned states through the breeding season. We are hoping for photographs, song recordings, details about habitat use, and any information on nest site locations or other potentially interesting observations of behavior or potential threats. Armed with this data, conservation scientists will be better placed to launch an in-depth study of

Bewick's habitat preferences that could help inform land management decisions in the region to benefit the wren.

[BirdScapes: New Approach to Bring Back the Birds](#)

It's no small feat to conserve birds that travel 4,000 miles or more each year across continents and international borders. We're working to ensure that priority species have the habitat they require at all stages of their life-cycles: breeding, wintering, and stopover on migration.

We call these priority habitat areas BirdScapes. They are places that are large enough to increase the numbers of target species, but small enough to facilitate measurement of results. From the Northern Prairie BirdScape, where [Long-billed Curlews](#) breed, to the Guatemala Conservation Coast, where [Golden-winged Warblers](#) and other migratory birds winter among sustainably managed crops such as cacao, black pepper, and tropical hardwoods. BirdScapes are strategically placed to have the greatest impact. See <https://abcbirds.org/birds/birdscapes/> for more details.

Exciting Discoveries for South American Storm-Petrels

This week, the Chilean organization Red de Observadores de Aves y Vida Silvestre de Chile (ROC), has announced the [discovery of the first known nest](#) of the Ringed Storm-Petrel. Located 70 km inland in the Atacama Desert, the site is far from what would be considered typical seabird nesting habitat.

ABC has collaborated with ROC to learn more about another poorly understood South American species, the [Markham's Storm-Petrel](#). In 2015, ROC reported the discovery of new nesting sites, also in the inhospitable Atacama Desert, and described a multitude of threats that are causing mortality of an estimated 20,000 adults and chicks every year.

In Peru, ABC has been working with [Proyecto de Golodrinas de la Tempestad de Collar](#) to save hundreds of Ringed Storm-Petrels that become disoriented and grounded by lights. We are hopeful that the exciting discovery by ROC in Chile will help direct efforts to find more nesting sites for this species in Peru and Chile, and provide important information to develop conservation plans for these two poorly known species.

Standing Together for Migratory Birds Senate Briefing and Reception

Our thanks to all who attended the May 9 briefing and reception on Capitol Hill in support of migratory bird conservation. And a special thanks to our event cosponsors, The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, American Birding Association, and Ducks Unlimited. This migratory bird event delivered a unified message that birds are important and need continued sources of funding. Many expert speakers discussed a range of migratory bird issues, and the links between birds and healthy economies, as well as the importance of maintaining federal funding for bird conservation. Presentation slides are available at <https://abcbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/final-agenda-w-links.pdf>.

Cornell Statement at Together for Migratory Birds Reception

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, its 100,000 supporters, and its nearly half-million citizen science participants, join you in celebrating the most amazing biological spectacle on earth – the return of a billion migratory birds from their tropical homes to breed in our North American backyards, forests, and open lands. Birds are nature’s best barometer for environmental health, and their extraordinary movements across the earth illuminate the heartbeat of earth’s annual cycle.

Amidst all of today’s economic and political challenges, let us all resolve that our birds and their habitats represent everything that is good about our natural world. They were here long before we were, and they deserve everybody’s undivided love, support, protection, and investment.

I propose a toast: May the distant descendants of everyone here, and of all the legislators we represent, look back and thank our generation for having the foresight and courage to battle the trends, and ensure perpetual safety for this nation’s unique and beloved wildlife heritage. (Delivered by Ken Roseberg, Cornell Lab of Ornithology).

[Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act Would Reduce Collisions](#)

ABC applauds U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL) and Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-VA) for introducing the Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act, H.R. 2542, in the House of Representatives. The bipartisan bill is designed to reduce bird mortality by calling for federal buildings to incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features. As many as a billion birds a year die in collisions with buildings in North America alone. We anticipate a companion bill will be introduced in the Senate soon. Please give this bill a boost [by contacting your Representative and Senators](#) and ask that they cosponsor it.

ABC Statement on U.S. Withdrawal from Paris Climate Agreement

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) condemns the decision to pull the United States out of the Paris Agreement on climate change. The reversal increases the dangers that a changing climate creates for migratory birds and many other species, including humans.

“This is another indication of a backward-looking energy policy that would plunder America’s remaining wildlife sanctuaries in the Arctic, offshore, and in the grasslands and forests,” said Steve Holmer, ABC’s Vice President of Policy. “We can develop a smart energy policy that responds to the climate challenge while still protecting birds and other wildlife and conserving their habitats.”

ABC remains strongly committed to combating the threats, including [climate change](#) and [habitat loss](#), which face birds throughout the Americas. Together with partners, we have planted more than 5 million trees and protected vital habitat in North, Central, and South America.

ABC Statement on the FY 18 Administration Budget Proposal

The administration’s budget proposal would be a disaster for birds and America’s working and public lands. It would slash key conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund (-84%) and eliminate completely the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program that benefit species like Cerulean and Golden-winged Warbler. Other key program cuts include State & Tribal Wildlife Grants (-15.6%), North American Wetlands Conservation Fund (-11.9%), and the Cooperative

Endangered Species Conservation Fund (-63%). Please ask your Senators and Representatives to oppose these cuts [by sending a letter today](#).

Groups Oppose Plan for Expansion of Offshore Drilling

One hundred thirty-three organizations – including ABC – issued a letter to Secretary of the Interior Zinke asking him not to proceed with plans for expanded offshore oil drilling and related seismic testing. The letter is available online at <http://on.nrdc.org/2qPdK3J>.

Wind Energy and Birds FAQ — Part 2: Bird-Smart Wind Energy Solutions

ABC often receives questions about wind energy development and its impacts on birds and other wildlife. In this blog post — the second in a three-part series — Michael Hutchins, Director of ABC's [Bird-Smart Wind Energy](#) Campaign, answers some of the more frequently asked questions. Read the first post in this series here: [Understanding the Threat Wind Energy Poses to Birds](#). See a full list of references at the end of the post and stay tuned for the final post in this series.

Illinois Alert: Legislation to Sanction Cat Abandonment

Illinois Senate Bill 641 would amend the Animal Population Control Fund by taking money away from low-income pet owners and using taxpayer dollars to maintain colonies of feral cats in parks and neighborhoods across the state. The bill is an attempt to undercut collaborative and good-faith efforts by a statewide feral cat task force by institutionalizing the systematic abandonment of cats and abdication of truly humane treatment for all animals. The bill now moves to the Governor's desk, the last opportunity for conservation groups to voice their concerns before the bill becomes law.

[Editorial by ABC's Grant Sizemore: Treat cats more like dogs](#)

[Informing Science-Based Evaluation and Expansion of Protected Areas](#)

A collaboration between Klamath Bird Observatory, Point Blue Conservation Science, the Avian Knowledge Network, and other partners uses birds as indicators of important habitats and biodiversity to identify and prioritize new areas for protection. (NABCI News).

America's Grasslands Conference, November 14-16, Fort Worth, Texas

The fourth biennial [America's Grasslands Conference](#) will discuss conserving grasslands that harbor dozens of species of conservation concern. The conference is hosted by National Wildlife Federation, the Coastal Prairie Partnership, Native Prairies Association of Texas, and the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service. The deadline for presentation abstracts is June 30.

Op-Ed: Plastic Pollution Doesn't Just Make For An Ugly Beach Day. It's Contaminating Our Food Chain

According to Los Angeles Times, “There’s a big lie about plastic — that you can throw it away. But that’s not true; there is no ‘away.’ Plastic bottles, plastic bags, snack wrappers, foam takeout containers, foam coffee cups, packing materials: these common, everyday items make up 85% of our waste stream. These items aren’t biodegradable and our ability to recycle them is limited. This societal reliance on throw-away plastic is strangling our environment — particularly our waterways.” [Los Angeles Times, [5/29/17](#) (+)]

20 Million Birds and Other Animals Die Annually after Ingesting Lead Left Behind by Hunters

In March, conservationists cried foul when new U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke overturned an Obama-administration ban on using lead ammunition or fishing tackle on federal lands. Lead is toxic to the neurological systems of animals that ingest it, killing millions each year. Though lead's poisonous effects on wildlife have been known for more than a century, eliminating it from nature continues to be an uphill battle. Read more at: <https://phys.org/news/2017-05-million-birds-animals-die-annually.html>

[Open Pipes: A Hidden Killer for Birds](#)

Birds face many threats to their survival throughout their delicate lives – from predators and disease to habitat destruction and extreme weather. But there is another deadly threat that can be found nearly everywhere birds and people live that hardly anyone, least of all birds, realizes is a problem. These overlooked but ubiquitous killers are open vertical pipes. (Sonoran Joint Venture).