Mourning Warbler: Alfred Yan

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

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Bird Calls

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A Towering Victory for Migrating Birds

Thanks to more than a decade of persistent advocacy work led by ABC, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has announced it will provide new lighting standards for communication towers and other tall structures that will have an immediate and lasting benefit for birds, particularly night-migrating songbirds.

According to a recent study by Travis Longcore, Associate Professor at the University of Southern California Spatial Sciences Institute, collisions with tall towers – some of which can reach heights of 2,000 feet – result in some seven million bird deaths annually in the United States alone. Night-migrating songbirds navigating by the stars are drawn to lights on the tops and down the sides of towers over 199 feet tall that are mandated by the FAA for aircraft safety. Confused by the lights and trapped in their glow, the birds collide with the structure, each other, or the ground, or circle until they drop from exhaustion.

Research has shown that flashing lights are far less likely to result in bird deaths, but until now, the FAA has required steady-burning or slow-pulsing red side-marker lights on towers, which are particularly deadly.

In 2007, ABC led a coalition of environmental organizations (including Defenders of Wildlife and National Audubon Society), tower industry representatives, and the Federal Communications Commission (the agency that licenses towers) to request an FAA study of tower lighting schemes. The FAA agreed, and in 2009, the FAA Airport Technology Research and Development Team began a series of flight evaluations examining the impact on tower visibility to pilots of three lighting variations: flashing the normally steady-burning side-marker lights in sync with the flashing lights on top of the tower; omitting the red side-marker lights altogether; and employing new lighting technologies, such as LED, instead of conventional, incandescent lights.

The results showed that flashing the side-marker lights was acceptable for small towers (up to 350 ft. tall) and that they could be omitted altogether on taller towers (over 351 ft. tall) so long as the additional bright flashing lights on top of the tower were operational. The optimal flash rate for the lights to flash was determined to be between 27 and 33 flashes per minute (fpm). Flashing top lights at slower speeds (under 27 fpm) did not provide the necessary visibility for pilots. Flashing at faster speeds (over 33 fpm) meant that the lights were not off for long enough to reduce the hazard to migratory birds.

The study also found that LED and other types of "rapid discharge" light fixtures provide a more attention-getting signal to pilots than traditional incandescent light fixtures. The near-instant on and off characteristics of LEDs (as opposed to the relatively slow-brightening-slow-fading glow of an incandescent bulb element) make them easier to locate from

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Mike Parr, ABC

Florida Airport Expansion Should Not Take Off

ABC has called on the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) to reject a West Orange Airport Authority proposal to expand an existing airport adjacent to Lake Apopka, saying it could have disastrous consequences for the area's birds.

"The expansion would negatively impact hundreds of thousands of birds, be a significant loss for the thousands of Americans who travel to the area each year, contributing to the local economy by their birdwatching activities, and would imperil taxpayers' substantial investment in managing water resources for the benefit of Florida's citizens and wildlife," said ABC Vice President for Conservation Advocacy, Darin Schroeder in a letter to Lad Daniels, Governing Board Member, and Hans G. Tanzler, Executive Director of SJRWMD.

In their proposal, the West Orange Airport Authority asks SJRWMD for 600 acres of wildlife habitat in exchange for 90 acres of farmland they currently own in order to expand the regional airport. ABC's letter points out that aside from the discrepancy in land area, this exchange could threaten the way the district currently manages its land for water quality and wildlife.

West Orange Airport Authority will be also be seeking federal stimulus money to develop and expand this airport, which means that the Federal Aviation Administration will mandate buffer areas around the airport based on the types of aircraft flying in and out. At airports serving turbine-powered aircraft (such as in this proposed expansion), a 10,000 foot radius excluding "hazardous wildlife attractants" is mandated. At Lake Apopka, this radius would extend over the impoundments currently managed for and used by wading birds, shorebirds, and ducks.

Lake Apopka is an important breeding site for Black-necked Stilts – in 2011 there were at least 52 nesting pairs at the sites.

In 1998, ABC designated the Lake Apopka Restoration Area as a Globally Important Bird Area (IBA) for its importance to federally endangered species that include Wood Storks, Florida Scrub-Jays, and a pair of resident endangered Whooping Cranes, as well as to hundreds of thousands of WatchList birds that reside, migrate through, or winter at this location, including Mottled Ducks, Swallow-tailed Kites, and Western, Semipalmated, White-rumped, and Stilt Sandpipers. Lake Apopka is also an important breeding site for Black-necked Stilts – in 2011 there were at least 52 nesting pairs at the sites.

Black-necked Stilts: Greg Lavaty, www.TexasTargetBirds.com

If you have questions or want more information on our articles, contact Bob Johns at 202-234-7181, x210, or e-mail bjohns@abcbirds.org

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Environmental Regulation: Choosing the Right Path

In 1969, *Time* Magazine captured the world's attention with a report on a shocking environmental disaster. Toxic waste in Ohio's Cuyahoga River had reached such high levels that the river actually caught fire. This and other widely publicized environmental catastrophes, such as the impact of DDT on birds, led to change in the form of new federal environmental regulations and the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Today, environmental regulations impact almost every facet of life in America; from big industry to small business to individual citizens in their own homes. While there is still much more to be done, the results speak for themselves: fewer children are at risk from lead in our paint and pipes; trout and other aquatic animals have returned to many streams that were once dead zones; and DDT no longer threatens birds such as Peregrine Falcons, Bald Eagles, and Brown Pelicans.

Despite these advances, there has been ongoing opposition to federal involvement in environmental regulation, accompanied by efforts to gut or scrap many laws. Recently, anti-environmental sentiment has swayed some key decisions: in the first three months of 2012, the Department of the Interior handed the wind power industry the gift of voluntary guidelines for their developments rather than imposing mandatory standards, and proposed easing logging restrictions in Northern Spotted Owl habitat; a bill was passed by the House of Representatives to strip the EPA of its ability to regulate lead in gun ammunition; and most recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed issuing 30-year take permits to kill Bald and Golden Eagles instead of the current five-year permits.

These moves have been paralleled by private industry efforts to contest federal regulatory decisions that would have seemed untouchable a decade ago. FMC Corporation became the first company to ever fight an EPA decision to cancel a pesticide (carbofuran, perhaps the most toxic bird-killer on the market), resulting in six years of legal battles to get the product off the market—while FMC continued to sell it. Reckitt Benckiser, manufacturer of numerous household brands from Woolite and Lysol to French's Mustard, has now followed FMC's lead and refused to abide by an EPA order to change the packaging and distribution of its rat poison d-CON to protect wildlife, children, and pets.

It is not surprising that a for-profit company will do whatever it can to avoid being regulated. Regulations cost companies money, which displeases owners and shareholders. We cannot assume that industry will do the right thing for birds, the environment, or even human health. If the laws that keep industrial pollution from flowing unchecked into the Cuyahoga were scrapped, how long would it take before the river caught fire again?

Since the cost of regulation is passed on to the consumer, we cannot leave the business of safeguarding the environment to market forces, either. Most of us fail to see the larger environmental picture when faced with our weekly grocery bill or the cost of that new television set. This leaves government regulation as the best way to maintain meaningful environmental safeguards.

For example, we need to strengthen our pesticide laws and switch from a regulatory system that forces us to discover whether or not chemicals are harmful to wildlife after they are already licensed to one that demands chemical companies prove that their products are not detrimental to wildlife before they are allowed on the market. We need to consider the environmental impact of wind power as part of its true cost and regulate it accordingly before we declare it a green source of energy and allow its unfettered expansion. We need to consider the impact of old-growth forest policy on Spotted Owls and Marbled Murrelets, not just on the forest industry's bottom line. And we need to prevent attempts to weaken existing laws such as the Endangered Species Act and Toxic Substances Control Act in favor of big business or other groups.

All too often, the environmental debate is framed as a choice between the environment and the economy. In the long run, this is a false dichotomy. In the words of Senator Gaylord Nelson, principal founder of Earth Day, "The economy is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the environment." There is no path to economic sustainability that sacrifices clean air, clean water, and protection for wildlife.

If we are to keep our natural places unspoiled for birds, other wildlife, and our children, keep our air clean and breathable, and prevent our rivers from catching fire again, we are going to have to accept that federal environmental regulation is necessary and beneficial. For some, that may mean a U-turn in their thinking and their policies, but as C.S. Lewis said, "We all want progress, but if you're on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive."

Most Adult California Condor Deaths Caused by Lead Poisoning

A new study by the San Diego Zoo's Institute for Conservation Research has found that 67 percent of adult California Condor deaths are attributable to lead poisoning.

There have been a total of 135 condor deaths from October 1992 (the date of the first death of a condor released back into the wild as part of the condor recovery program) through December 2009. The study examined 98 carcasses, but could only determine the cause of death for 76 birds. Lead toxicosis was the most important cause in fledged birds, causing 13 of 50 deaths in juveniles (26 percent), and ten of 15 deaths in adults (67 percent). Trash ingestion was the most important mortality factor in nestlings, causing eight of 11 deaths (73 percent).

The report states that "The mortality factors thought to be important in the decline of the historic California Condor population, particularly lead poisoning, remain the most important documented mortality factors today. Without effective mitigation, these factors can be expected to have the same effects on the sustainability of the wild populations as they have in the past."

"Although lead toxicosis from spent ammunition still threatens the survival of the California Condor, one of our most iconic species, the good news is that solutions are available in the form of non-toxic ammunition. We can make this a win-win situation if we choose to," said Dr. Bruce A. Rideout, principal author of the study and Director of Wildlife Disease Laboratories at the Institute for Conservation Research, San Diego Zoo Global.

"In all likelihood, many more condors would have died from lead poisoning had it not been for the fact that all wild condors in California are normally captured twice each year, tested for lead poisoning and treated if necessary," said John H. Schulz, ABC's Non-Lead Campaign Manager.

The effort to save the California Condor was started in 1982, when the remaining 22 wild birds were captured in a last-ditch effort to save the species. Of the 390 condors that exist today, 210 are in the wild, with 118 in California, 73 in Arizona and 19 in Mexico.

California Condor: Greg Homel

Although lead toxicosis from spent ammunition still threatens the survival of the California Condor...the good news is that solutions are available in the form of non-toxic ammunition.

Dr. Bruce A. Rideout
Director of Wildlife Disease Laboratories
The Institute for Conservation Research, San Diego Zoo

Among the collaborators in the study were the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey, University of California at Santa Cruz and Davis, Peregrine Fund, San Diego Zoo Global, and Phoenix Zoo.

A Towering Victory *continued from page 1*

greater distances, and allow the precise control of the flash rate and synchronous operation with other fixtures. The pronounced off cycle of LED fixtures would also make them less attractive to birds. LED lights also use less electricity, providing a long-term cost-saving to tower owners and operators.

Based on the results of this research, the FAA proposes to make specific changes to its Obstruction Lighting Standards, including a proposal to omit or flash steady-burning red lights from several obstruction lighting configurations.

"This FAA study offers a solution to reduce bird mortality at towers, and as such, provides a major step forward for the conservation of our declining songbirds," said Darin Schroeder, Vice President for Conservation Advocacy for American Bird Conservancy.

This victory comes on the heels of a recent interim decision by the FCC to enable a greater level of public input and review for new tower applications (see *Bird Calls* Vol. 16, No. 1).

Endangered South American Birds Benefitting from Tree-Planting Programs

Endangered birds will benefit from more than 1.75 million trees being planted in Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia. These include the Jocotoco Antpitta and Black-breasted Puffleg in Ecuador, the Marvelous Spatuletail and Long-whiskered Owlet in Peru, and the Gorgeted Wood-quail and Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird in Colombia.

The efforts have been led by ABC's partners, Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos (ECOAN) in Peru, Fundación Jocotoco in Ecuador, and Fundación ProAves in Colombia, with support from ABC and other groups.

In Ecuador, Jocotoco has spent six years restoring the Tapichalaca, Jorupe, Buenaventura, and Yanacocha Reserves by reforesting former pastures using a combination of direct planting and natural regeneration. More than 100 native tree species have been planted with an average of 30 species in each reserve. Seeds were collected from adjacent forests with the help of local communities and grown in greenhouses that matched the environmental/growing conditions needed for each particular species.

In Colombia, ProAves has several dozen nurseries in their national network of twenty private reserves. In the Serranía de Yariguies Mountains, ProAves planted nearly 200,000 trees on approximately 1,000 acres of shade coffee and cacao in two multi-year Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act projects. ProAves will plant 150,000 trees on an additional 1,100 acres as part of a three-year project to reforest agricultural lands. Many endangered, endemic birds will benefit, as will threatened migratory species such as the Cerulean Warbler.

The Peruvian effort has been ongoing for nine years; however, in 2011 alone, more than 150,000 trees were planted. More than 50,000 native trees and shrubs from 21 different species were planted on degraded lands in the buffer zones of two prized Andean reserves, the Abra Patricia-Alto Nieva Private Conservation Area and the Huembo Conservation Easement. The trees will create a buffer zone around adjacent forests, creating more high-quality habitat for birds.

ECOAN also planted more than 123,000 native trees and shrubs and 154,000 coffee bushes on private lands to help integrate farming efforts with conservation. Trees were used for silvipasture (a system that combines forestry and cattle grazing in a mutually beneficial way), living fences (which provide natural boundaries for pasture land), and agroforestry systems, where shade coffee and other crops are produced.

The Long-whiskered Owlet is a rare Peruvian endemic that will benefit from tree-planting programs at ECOAN's Abra Patricia Reserve. Photo: Alex Durand Torres

In 2011, ECOAN and communities in the Vilcanota Mountains in southern Peru planted 46,000 endangered *Polylepis* trees, benefitting threatened birds such as the critically endangered Royal Cinclodes. As part of this project, they also planted 6,000 non-native eucalyptus and 3,000 non-native pines at lower elevations where eucalyptus trees are already present as alternative sources of fuel wood. With a plentiful supply of easy-to-grow timber, the communities have less need to harvest *Polylepis* for fuel. This project has planted a total of 640,000 *Polylepis* trees since 2002.

ABC is grateful to Conservation International's Global Conservation Fund (GCF) and Fondo de las Américas (FONDAM), Fondo por la Acción Ambiental, LoroParque, World Land Trust, and Scottish Electric for their support of this work. American Forest's Global ReLeaf program provided financing for the reforestation work at Abra Patricia and Huembo. Funding for the reforestation work in all three countries was provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Program.


Brian Patteson

Cahow Conservation Reaches Recovery Milestone

The recovery program for the Bermuda Petrel, a bird once believed extinct, has reached a major milestone—more than 100 nesting pairs in the wild.

The nocturnal, ground-nesting Bermuda Petrel, also known as the Cahow, is the national bird of Bermuda. It was abundant when Bermuda was discovered over 500 years ago, but predation by introduced cats, dogs, and rats, and habitat destruction by pigs took a massive toll, as did hunting by the island's human settlers. Many believed that the bird had become extinct.

But in 1951, 18 nesting pairs were discovered on several small rocky islets in Castle Harbour. Those pairs were producing only about seven or eight chicks per year. An intensive Cahow Recovery Program was begun in 1961 by biologist David Wingate, and is now managed by the Department of Conservation Services. The program has worked hard to control predators, build artificial nest burrows, and carry out research to promote the recovery of the Cahow.

With this intensive management, the population continues to move towards becoming self-sustaining, and this year reached a critical milestone of 100 nesting pairs (a few birds are now being seen in U.S. waters off the East Coast each year). "The ultimate objective is to increase the number of nesting Cahows to at least 1,000 nesting pairs," says Jeremy Madeiros, Senior Terrestrial Conservation Officer for the program.

"This has been an amazing success story that involves the same kinds of issues we see in many island locations that have suffered with introduced species. The predation and impacts to habitat can be devastating, and have caused countless species to go extinct around the world. The Cahow Recovery Program is a great example of how these threats can be overcome," said George Wallace, Vice President for Oceans and Islands for ABC.

ABC Fights Back Against Dangerous Rat Poisons

Thousands of people have responded to an ABC call to action to stop three companies from selling certain rat poisons in formulations that can harm birds, other wildlife, pets, and children.

Most companies have complied with an order from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to sell their rat poisons in bait stations that prevent access by children and pets, and to restrict the sale of "second-generation" rodenticides (which are more toxic than first-generation products) that can cause fatal hemorrhaging in owls, Bald Eagles, and other wildlife. But three companies, Reckitt Benckiser (makers of a range of well-known household products including Lysol, Woolite, and French's Mustard), Spectrum Brands (makers of popular pet care products), and Liphatech, have refused, continuing to market d-CON, Hot Shot, Rid-a-Rat, and Generation unchanged.

Owls and other raptors, as well as dogs and cats, face gruesome deaths from these chemicals when they feed on poisoned rodents. Most recently, a Red-tailed Hawk, the mate of the famous and beloved Pale Male, was killed in New York City, apparently from eating a poisoned rat.

Poison-control centers get 12,000 to 15,000 calls each year because of accidental ingestion of rat poison by children. The EPA estimates that the unreported child exposure rate may be four times as high.

By spurning the EPA directive, the companies are forcing the federal government to spend vast sums of taxpayer dollars in an extended multi-year bureaucratic process to take these rat-control poisons off the market.


Red-tailed Hawk with rodent prey.
Photo: Michael Stubblefield

Please go to ABC's action page to register your concerns; www.abcbirds.org/action.

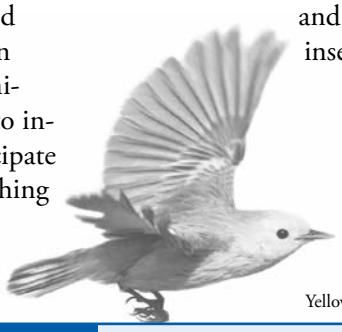
Scotts Fined for Bird Seed Poisoning; Ongoing Monitoring Needed

U.S. District Court Judge James Graham has accepted a guilty plea from Scotts Miracle-Gro Co. for distributing insecticide-tainted bird seed. The company will have to pay $4.5 million in fines. According to court records, in 2008, Scotts distributed 73 million packages of birdseed coated with insecticides. The chemicals Storcide II and Actellic 5E (containing the active ingredients chlorpyrifos and pirimiphos-methyl respectively) were intended to keep insects from destroying stored seed. Scotts used these products despite being alerted to toxicity dangers by a staff chemist and ornithologist. Storcide II is even labeled as "Toxic to birds. Toxic to wildlife," with the warning "Exposed treated seed may be hazardous to birds."

No such warning exists on the Actellic 5E label, however. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) own fact sheet states that "Ecological risks are not of concern to the Agency." Yet the same fact sheet also states: "Although pirimphos-methyl is highly toxic to birds and fish, these risks are not of concern based on the use pattern of pirimiphos-methyl." This would seem to indicate that the EPA did not anticipate this chemical being used on anything intentionally fed to birds.

"EPA needs to amend the use label for Actellic 5E and any other pesticide containing the same active ingredient, pirimiphos-methyl, consistent with their own fact sheet, to ensure that no other birds are poisoned by seed dosed with this toxic chemical," said George Fenwick, President of ABC. "This highlights a key problem that it is the pesticide registrant that writes the labels on pesticides, not EPA. This case indicates that EPA is not effectively checking that the labels include appropriate safeguards for birds."

In April 2011, ABC announced the results of its independent bird seed testing, undertaken as a result of sporadic wild bird seed contamination incidents. The study analyzed samples from four different supply sources across the country, and included a batch of Scotts' seed. Detailed analyses of the seed were conducted at the California Food Safety Laboratory at the University of California, Davis, specifically looking for harmful pesticides, such as organophosphate and carbamate insecticides.



Yellow Warbler: Alfred Yan

Dickcissel: Dave Palmer

"We found that all of the tested bird seed was either free from pesticides or that pesticides occurred at only trace levels that would not threaten bird health. We cannot tell if this latest incident involving Scotts is an isolated one or if there are more seed producers out there who are guilty of similar violations. For the safety of the billions of birds that are fed by millions of Americans at backyard feeders, continued testing is needed, though ABC lacks the required funding. "One source of funding for this could be the Scotts fine," said George Fenwick.

SAVE THE DATE!

ABC Roundtable for the Conservation of Migratory Birds

October 24, 2012

Please join us for an interactive all-day session this October 24 at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center Visitors Center in Laurel, Maryland to discuss migratory bird conservation. We will cover bird conservation issues and priorities that will be incorporated into a science meeting to be held in November, a policy meeting to be held early in 2013, and the major Partners in Flight meeting in late summer or fall of 2013.

To register, visit: **https://www.abcbirds.org/membership/bca_reg.cfm**

Fate of New Rule to Protect Hatteras Shorebirds Up in the Air

The National Park Service has published a final rule on the contentious issue of off-road vehicle (ORV) use at North Carolina's Cape Hatteras National Seashore. This follows a seven-year process and a lawsuit filed by several conservation organizations. However, bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate that, if passed, would effectively overturn the Service's rule. A hearing was held by the House Natural Resources Subcommittee, at which ABC submitted testimony in opposition to the bill.

Hatteras was designated as the nation's first National Seashore in 1953. In recent years, it has experienced high-intensity ORV use that impacts a variety of wildlife species, including the endangered Piping Plover.

Piping Plover populations have been hard hit in many areas, particularly in recent years at Cape Hatteras. Their nests are nearly impossible to see while driving on the beach, so protection measures are absolutely necessary.

George Fenwick
President, American Bird Conservancy

The Park Service's new rules allow ORV use on the majority of the seashore, with 28 of the seashore's 67 miles of shoreline set aside as year-round ORV routes, and 13 miles seasonally open to ORVs. Only 26 miles of shoreline are designated as year-round vehicle-free areas for the benefit of other people and wildlife. The plan also proposes new parking facilities, ORV ramps, and water shuttles to increase visitor access to beaches.

"Piping Plover populations have been hard hit in many areas, particularly in recent years at Cape Hatteras. Their nests are nearly impossible to see while driving on the beach, so protection measures are absolutely necessary," said George Fenwick, ABC President. "These rules should not prove onerous to the ORV community, but will result in considerable benefit to the plovers."

Beach-nesting birds and sea turtles at the National Seashore reached alarming lows under the unmanaged beach-driving scenario, but showed signs of recovery after temporary rules were put in place in April 2008. No Piping Plover chicks survived in 2002 and 2004, but 15 chicks fledged in 2010 and ten fledged in 2011.

New rules ordinarily go into effect no less than 30 days after publication in the Federal Register; however, the Park Service found that they have good cause to truncate this period, and moved implementation to February 15, before this year's breeding season.

As the rule now stands, a permit is required for each vehicle at a cost of $120 for a calendar year or $50 for seven days. Permit applicants are also required to watch an instructional video.

Piping Plover: Bill Hubick

New Technology Helps Locate Colonies of Rare Black-capped Petrel

High-tech devices such as night vision goggles, thermal imaging cameras, and portable radar systems are helping to save the Black-capped Petrel, a bird so rare and reclusive that conservationists have a hard time even figuring out where most of its nesting areas are located.

This technology recently helped researchers from Environmental Protection in the Caribbean, Grupo Jaragua, and ABR Consulting, assisted by ABC, to locate 12 active nests on the mountainous border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The team identified 150 individuals in only four hours, in an area where only four or five individuals had previously been identified, and then only by the sound of their calls.

"The novel application of this technology allowed the research team to discover new breeding sites of these birds on Hispaniola. We investigated a site where we had previously heard only a handful of individuals, and were amazed at how many birds were actually there," said Jessica Hardesty Norris, Seabird Program Director for ABC, and co-author of the recently produced conservation plan to protect the species. "Finding new nests will allow us to assess the threats that affect the birds during breeding, and stop the decline of this rare species."

The research team used portable marine radar to determine the flight paths of petrels as they returned from their open ocean feeding forays. When they picked up an incoming bird, the researchers called a team of lookouts stationed in clearings along the mountain ridge, who used night-vision goggles and a thermal imaging camera to pinpoint the nesting areas – often in nine-foot-deep burrows in near-vertical cliffs.

The newly discovered nesting sites are located in a national park. Although some of these sites are within a protected area, there is still logging for charcoal production and other uses in the immediate vicinity, so the team is concerned about the long-term conservation of these sites.

James Goetz holding a petrel that landed near researchers during surveys. Photo: J. Goetz, 2008.

The Black-capped Petrel, which has an estimated world population of only around 2,000 individuals, was thought extinct until it was rediscovered in 1963. It is confirmed to breed only on the island of Hispaniola. It was once common on Guadeloupe, but was extirpated there in the 19th Century; it also once existed on Martinique. The species is threatened by predation from introduced mammals, deforestation, human encroachment, and exploitation. Urbanization and associated increases in artificial lighting likely increase the risk of these birds colliding with trees, wires, and buildings.

The research team also plans to evaluate petrel behavior near cell phone towers with radar and/or thermal imaging, and deploy remote listening units to record petrel calls.

Remnant forest on La Visite escarpment, Massif de la Selle, Haiti. This area harbors the largest known breeding population of Black-capped Petrels, and is threatened by local farmers, who are clearing the forests for agriculture. Photo: J. Goetz, 2010

Millerbirds Successfully Breeding on Laysan Island

The Millerbirds translocated to Hawai'i's Laysan Island from Nihoa Island in the fall of 2011 (see *Bird Calls* Vol. 15, No. 3) have successfully reproduced, marking a significant accomplishment in the conservation of this highly endangered species. Seven pairs of Millerbirds have produced ten fledglings this spring on Laysan Island and at the time of writing, one more pair is at the nestling stage.

"This is another huge milestone in the effort to save the Millerbird from extinction. We still have a long way to go, but each victory like this is encouraging and tells us that we, and the Millerbirds, are succeeding," said George Wallace, ABC's Vice President for Oceans and Islands.

The translocation project is a cooperative effort between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), ABC, and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The team received a 2011 Recovery Champion Award from FWS in recognition of their success. "Recovery Champions are helping listed species get to the point at which they are secure in the wild and no longer need Endangered Species Act protection," said Service Director Dan Ashe. "These groups and individuals have done amazing work in helping to bring dozens of species back from the brink of extinction, while improving habitat that benefits many other species..."

There are approximately 775 Millerbirds left in the world. Until recently, all were confined to 155-acre Nihoa, one of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, where they risked extinction from potential introduced predators, hurricanes, or other unpredictable events. In September 2011, 24 birds were captured and relocated to 1,025-acre Laysan Island, 650 miles away, to create a second population and reduce the species' risk of extinction. Millerbirds historically occurred on Laysan, but were extirpated sometime prior to 1923, a result of the devastation of the island's vegetation by rabbits, which have since been eradicated.

One of the first Nihoa Millerbird fledglings to hatch on Laysan, March 2012. Photo: Robby Kohley

At least 21 of the released birds survived Laysan's harsh winter storms, and have formed ten pairs on the island. The first fledgling was observed outside of the nest on March 25, and four other nests fledged chicks in April and May.

"Our results with the Millerbirds demonstrate that critical conservation needs can be achieved in Hawai'i, in spite of sometimes daunting logistical challenges. This incredible collaboration is just one example of the dedication that exists here, and shows that protecting Hawai'i's other endangered birds is possible, given sufficient resources," said Chris Farmer, ABC's Science Coordinator for Hawaiian Birds.

"The early success of the Millerbird Translocation is very encouraging and we hope these fledglings will be the first of many Millerbirds to hatch and successfully reproduce on Laysan Island – bringing the species that much closer to recovery," said Jeff Newman, acting field supervisor for the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office.

New Fishing Method Will Dramatically Reduce Seabird Bycatch in Ecuador

Waved Albatross: Susanna Chan

ABC and its Ecuadorian partner Equilibrio Azul have helped deploy a new fishing system to dramatically reduce seabird bycatch in the Ecuadorian hake fleet. Longline bycatch poses a significant threat to populations of the critically endangered Waved Albatross. Other seabird species that may benefit include the Pink-footed Shearwater, Parkinson's Petrel, Blue-footed Booby, and Shy and Buller's Albatrosses.

The new Medina line-setting system helps mitigate seabird bycatch in small-vessel, bottom-set longline fisheries. Bycatch occurs when the fishing lines are being set or being pulled in. Albatrosses and other seabirds grab the bait, become snagged on the barbed hooks, and are either drowned or maimed. Hundreds of thousands of albatrosses and other seabirds are killed in this way each year in fisheries around the world.

"This new system is inexpensive, effective, and acceptable to the local, small-scale fishermen. It reduces interactions with seabirds during line-setting by allowing the bait to sink rapidly, but doesn't add so much weight that the fishermen have trouble hauling the line back on board," said George Wallace, ABC's Vice President for Oceans and Islands.

ABC partners Jodie Darquea and Roberto Medina (after whom the system is named) of Equilibrio Azul worked with the Ecuadorian Ministry of the Environment, international fisheries conservation expert Nigel Brothers, and local Ecuadorian fishermen to develop this system.

Based on experiments and observations, the team learned that approximately 50 percent of the seabirds were being caught during line-setting and 50 percent during the haul. The practice of throwing offal off the side of the boat during line-setting also increased the number of birds attracted to the lines. The team also observed that some birds were killed due to the fishermen's lack of knowledge on how to safely handle hooked birds and remove the hooks.

The Medina setting system is tailored specifically for the Ecuadorian hake fishery. Instead of baiting the hooks and tossing them into the sea one by one, the Medina system allows hooks to be pre-baited and lined up on small metal bars seated in a plastic box or container at the back of the boat. In addition to reducing the time that bait floats on the surface, this system helps the fishermen by reducing the time it takes to set the lines from about 20 minutes to less than four. Currently, the Medina system is being used in at-sea trials, and efforts are now underway with Ecuador's Ministry of the Environment and the National Fisheries Institute to conclude the formal evaluation.

ABC thanks the David and Lucile Packard Foundation for their support of this project.

The Medina System, a new fishing technology being used in Ecuador to reduce seabird bycatch. Photo: Nigel Brothers

Endangered Hawaiian State Bird Relocated Away From Airport

Michael Walther

Following an emergency declaration issued by Hawai'i Governor Neil Abercrombie in 2011, some 300 endangered Hawaiian Geese (Nēnē) are being trapped and removed from the area around the Kaua'i Airport and transported to Maui and the Big Island because of concerns over potential collisions with airplanes.

The goose population around the airport has mushroomed in recent years from just 18 birds in 1999 to approximately 400 last year, thanks in part to the good habitat provided by nearby lagoons and a resort complex with ponds and a lush golf course.

After the geese are caught, they spend six days in quarantine to ensure they are healthy and have not contracted diseases such as avian malaria, and then transported to Maui. The first birds arrived in April 2011, and are being housed at a facility managed by the state Division of Forestry and Wildlife at Haleakala Ranch.

The Nēnē is a medium-sized goose and the state bird of Hawai'i. By the 1950s, its total population had shrunk to only 20-30 birds, but it has been making a remarkable comeback thanks to decades of captive breeding programs, predator control, and habitat management. Today, the wild population is estimated to be around 2,000.

The effort to relocate the Nēnē has coincided with a spate of mongoose sightings near the airport. These introduced predators are common on O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i, and the Big Island, and have recently been sighted and trapped on Kaua'i (see article on page 23).

New Seabird Species May Not Be Extinct

A bird species known only from two records and thought to be extinct is again making news. Scientists recently announced that they have evidence that small numbers of Bryan's Shearwaters likely still exist on Japanese islands.

In 2011, Bryan's Shearwater was declared a new species—the first for the United States in 37 years. It was discovered thanks to Dr. Peter Pyle, a sharp-eyed scientist at the Institute for Bird Populations, who realized that a specimen collected on Midway Atoll in 1963 had been misidentified. The differences he noted in measurements and physical appearance compared with similar species were later confirmed by DNA analysis. The new species was named the Bryan's Shearwater, *Puffinus bryani,* after Edwin Horace Bryan Jr., a former curator of the B. P. Bishop Museum in Honolulu, and author of many publications on Hawaiian fauna.

Bryan's Shearwater: Smithsonian Institution

At that time, it was feared that the Bryan's Shearwater might already be extinct. However, at the 39th Annual Meeting of the Pacific Seabird Group, held on Oahu in February 2012, researchers from the Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute in Japan reported finding six specimens between 1997 and 2011 on the Ogasawara (Bonin) Islands, about 620 miles south of Tokyo. DNA testing confirmed that the birds were Bryan's Shearwaters. Five of the six specimens were recovered carcasses, while the sixth was a live bird.

"When I found out about these records I was ecstatic," says Pyle. "Not only does it indicate that Bryan's Shearwaters still survive, but it suggests where they might breed, the first step to conserving what must be a highly endangered species."

The next step for scientists is to locate breeding colonies, and take steps to eradicate rats there. Half of the specimens showed evidence of rat predation.

"Non-native rats pose a serious threat to island birds, often preying upon eggs and young. The science of rodent eradication has advanced dramatically in the past few years and has been successfully used in many places," said George Wallace, Vice President for Oceans and Islands at ABC.

Listening devices have also been installed on Midway, where the bird was once seen, and on two islands in the Bonins where carcasses were found, in hopes of recording the bird's call.

New ABC Film Depicts Bird Extinction Crisis in Hawai'i

A new 30-minute film, produced by ABC and narrated by actor Richard Chamberlain, explores the ongoing bird extinction crisis in Hawai'i that has caused the extinction of more than 70 native bird species in the state.

The film, *Endangered Hawai'i*, was made with funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. It premiered at the Environmental Film Festival in Washington, D.C.

Featuring beautiful footage of some of Hawai'i's stunning birds and their habitats, the film showcases the unique biodiversity of our 50th state and explains the environmental crisis that has caused Hawai'i to become known as the bird extinction capital of the world.

Since the arrival of Europeans to the Hawaiian Islands, 71 bird species have become extinct out of a total of 113 endemic species that existed at the time of first human colonization. Of the remaining 42 species, 32 are federally listed, and ten of those have not been seen for up to 40 years.

A key species of concern is the Kiwikiu, or Maui Parrotbill, a honeycreeper that was once widespread on Maui and Moloka'i, but is now limited to approximately 500 individuals high on the windward slopes of Haleakalā volcano on Maui.

Maui Parrotbill: Michael Walther

I'iwi: Jack Jeffrey

...the film showcases the unique biodiversity of our 50th state and explains the environmental crisis that has caused Hawai'i to become known as the bird extinction capital of the world.

Another honeycreeper, the Palila, was once found throughout much of the Hawaiian Islands, but now clings to less than five percent of its original range on the Big Island of Hawai'i. The Millerbird is down to as few as 775 individuals (see page 10), and the Ākepa is already extinct on O'ahu and probably Maui, too.

The film points out that the primary threats to Hawaiian birds are introduced species: predators such as cats and rats; herbivores, such as goats and pigs that degrade native habitat; diseases such as avian malaria and pox transmitted by non-native mosquitoes; and plants that displace native species and reduce habitat quality for native birds. Climate change may further reduce or eliminate mosquito-free – and hence disease-free – upland habitat as temperatures rise.

The film covers ongoing conservation actions to reduce these threats, and emphasizes that significant federal funding is one key to reversing the current alarming declines in native bird populations. Unfortunately, the resources directed to Hawai'i's environmental problems are low in proportion to their need. While Hawaiian birds comprise over one third of all U.S. bird species listed under the Endangered Species Act, only 4.1 percent of funding for the recovery of listed bird species is directed their way.

ABC is currently distributing the film; it is now available for viewing at **https://vimeo.com/42592260**.

Scan with your hand-held device to see the film, *Endangered Hawai'i*

BLM Takes Action on Bird Deaths from PVC Claim Markers

After ABC sounded the alarm nationally on the significant bird mortality associated with the use of PVC pipes in the West (see *Bird Calls* Vol. 16, No. 1), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S.D.A. Forest Service (FS), and ABC have begun identifying and implementing solutions to mitigate the problem.

That threat comes from the 10-20 million pipes used to mark the boundaries of 3.4 million mining claims, mainly in the West. Some pipes are responsible for killing over 30 birds each, mostly cavity nesters – the Ash-throated Flycatcher and Mountain Bluebird are the most frequently documented victims, along with woodpeckers, sparrows, shrikes, kestrels, and owls. Official state birds from at least nine western states have also been documented as being killed, including Cactus Wren (AZ), Mountain Bluebird (ID, NV), and Western Meadowlark (KS, MT, NE, ND, OR, WY).

Mountain Bluebirds (immature on left): Greg Homel

Mitigation of this problem is now being addressed by BLM's national minerals, wildlife, and abandoned mine land programs. The Washington Office of the BLM is now urging all states to discover, then cap, fill, or pull pipes used for mining claims or other activities.

Small birds apparently see the opening at the top of the PVC pipes as a hollow suitable for roosting or nesting, or possibly a place to pool body heat during cold nights. The birds enter the holes only to become trapped because the walls are too smooth to allow them to climb up the sides, and the pipes are too narrow for the birds to extend their wings and fly out. Death from dehydration or starvation follows.

"This is a very significant bird mortality threat, likely accounting for a million or more bird deaths each year," said Darin Schroeder, ABC's Vice President for Conservation Advocacy. "The agencies must act quickly to prevent further unnecessary bird deaths by requiring mining companies to replace their uncapped PVC pipe-markers with solid, high-visibility stakes when they seek claim re-registration."

In November 2011, one week after ABC first brought national attention to the issue, BLM specialists in Oregon documented high rates of bird mortality at claims in the Burns area – rates double those found at a previous study in Nevada.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: Greg Homel

Mitigation of this problem is now being addressed by BLM's national minerals, wildlife, and abandoned mine land programs. The Washington Office of the BLM is now urging all states to discover, then cap, fill, or pull pipes used for mining claims or other activities. BLM is drafting policy to directly address this issue, and at the same time, addressing the issue in its draft Migratory Bird Strategy. Some BLM offices, such as Montana's, are already considering this issue as part of their state migratory bird policy. BLM has also formed pipe removal programs in California and Nevada, and has made plans to incorporate this issue in upcoming programs. In addition, local pipe pulling efforts have been carried out by the Nevada Department of Wildlife and Red Rock Audubon.

Greg Lavaty, www.TexasTargetBirds.com

Prairie Warbler

Glen Tepke

Mountain Plover

Ralph Wright

Whip-poor-will

Greg Lavaty, www.TexasTargetBirds.com

Bachman's Sparrow

Greg Lavaty, www.TexasTargetBirds.com

Black-capped Vireo

Joint Ventures Program Celebrates 25 Years of Conservation Results

2012 marks the 25th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures Program – an initiative that has delivered outstanding conservation results across the United States. The program has achieved these results in part by leveraging an astounding $35 in contributions from partners, cooperators, interested groups, and individuals for every $1 of federal funds it has received.

Today, a network of Joint Ventures (JVs) exists across North America. JV partnerships are supported with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service, with additional federal, state, and private funds.

The JV program has its origins in the 1986 joint U.S.-Canadian North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which aimed to restore continental waterfowl populations to the levels of the 1970s.

Since their launch, the JVs have expanded from waterfowl-only conservation to addressing the needs of all birds.

ABC leads the Central Hardwoods (CHJV), Appalachian Mountains (AMJV), Oaks and Prairies (OPJV), and Rio Grande Joint Ventures (RGJV), and plays a significant role in several others. These JV's have only been created in recent years, yet have already accomplished a great deal:

- AMJV partners are restoring breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler targeted to priority areas for the species. This habitat will also benefit the Prairie Warbler, Field Sparrow, Whip-poor-will, and American Woodcock. By 2050, they aim to have restored 220,000 acres.
- AMJV partners in Tennessee and North Carolina recently acquired Rocky Fork, a completely forested tract that supports Golden-winged, Cerulean, and Worm-eating Warblers, among other priority birds. The tract was slated for development, but will now be protected.
- The CHJV is restoring roughly 250,000 acres of pine and pine-oak woodland for the benefit of WatchList species such as the Brown-headed Nuthatch, Prairie Warbler, and Bachman's Sparrow, and regional priorities such as the Whip-poor-will and Eastern Wood-Pewee.
- OPJV partners are working to restore and manage 55,000 acres of grassland, shrub, and savannah habitat in Texas and Oklahoma to address the habitat needs of WatchList species such as the Painted Bunting, Mountain Plover, and Bell's Vireo.
- OPJV is working with local conservation groups to help protect or acquire up to 25,000 acres in the Balcones Canyonlands to provide breeding habitat for the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo.
- The RGJV has contracted with the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory to develop a Chihuahuan Desert Grassland Bird Conservation Plan. This plan provides species-habitat relationships for five priority grassland birds on Grassland Priority Conservation Areas.

Greg Homel

Additional Habitat Protected for Endangered Grenada Dove

The Government of Grenada has taken an important step to protect the critically endangered Grenada Dove by adding 100 acres of land to the Perseverance Protected Area and Dove Sanctuary. This was the last tract of government land containing doves that lacked protection. All remaining dove habitat is now in the hands of private landowners. With this new addition, the sanctuary will protect a little more than 150 acres of key habitat for the dove.

The Grenada Dove, which is endemic to the island, has been relegated to two forested areas: the west-central coastal area north of St. Georges in and around the Perseverance Protected Area and Dove Sanctuary, and the Mt. Hartman National Park in southern Grenada. In 2007 and 2008, ABC helped successfully lobby the Grenada Government and developers to site a proposed hotel complex at Mt. Hartman in a way that would avoid sensitive areas (see *Bird Calls* Vol. 11, No. 3), ensuring that Mt. Hartman National Park would continue to protect the Grenada Dove. In the end, with the downturn in the economy, the resort was never built.

Biologists continue to gather more information about the natural history and biology of the dove and the threats it faces. In 2011, ABC supported a research project conducted by Bonnie Rusk and the Grenada Dove Conservation Programme to identify key water sources for Grenada Doves during the dry season. Identifying these sources enabled conservationists to work with the Forestry and National Park Department to ensure their long-term protection.

The total population of the dove is estimated to be 185 individuals, so the loss of even one individual is significant.

In addition to development, exotic mongooses pose a significant threat to the dove population. In April of 2012, ABC provided the Forestry and National Park Department 30 traps to help control mongooses before and during the breeding season.

Four New Private Conservation Areas Created in Peru

Amazon Conservation Association (ACA) has worked with local communities to establish four Private Conservation Areas (PCAs) in the Cusco and Madre de Dios Departments of Peru's Andes-Amazon region. The Ukumari Llaqta, Pumataki, San Juan Bautista, and Boa Wadack Dari PCAs protect some of the most biologically diverse habitat on the planet.

"This is an incredibly biologically sensitive area which is under intense pressure from habitat loss and deforestation. Conservation action here is very important for many species, but especially to several endemic and threatened birds," said Luis Felipe Duchicela, Executive Director of ACA.

At over 46,000 acres, the Ukumari Llaqta PCA makes up the vast majority of the newly protected lands. Its rich montane forests are home to an extraordinary number of species, including the threatened Andean Condor and Tawny Tit-Spinetail, as well as spectacled bear and Andean fox.

The 406-acre Pumataki PCA, located near Cusco, shares its eastern border with the southern tip of the world-famous Manu National Park. Its grassland and cloud forest ecosystems are home to hundreds of species, including the Tawny Tit-Spinetail and Giant Conebill.

The San Juan Bautista and Boa Wadack Dari PCAs, each 57 acres, are in an area rapidly being deforested by illegal gold mining. Adjacent to the buffer zone of the Tambopata National Reserve, their strategic protection will help to guarantee conservation efforts in this highly diverse region. The vulnerable Blue-headed Macaw has been sighted there and researchers have already identified 33 threatened amphibian species within the two PCAs.

Private conservation areas are privately owned lands that are legally designated by Peru's National System of Protected Areas, and are an increasingly popular method of protecting the country's threatened species and their habitats. ACA worked closely with the local communities to create these new protected areas, accompanying their efforts with community agroforestry, reforestation, and sustainable agriculture projects, along with training programs for park guards.

ABC and Office of Surface Mining Team Up to Help Forest Birds

ABC and the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) are collaborating to increase migratory bird habitat restoration and forest reclamation efforts on mine lands in the Appalachian Mountains. The two groups signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) during a recent tree-planting event in eastern Kentucky.

OSM is congressionally mandated to ensure that mine land is reclaimed once mining operations have ceased. Traditionally, land has been reclaimed to non-native grasses. Reclaiming the land back to native forest yields numerous environmental benefits, including enhancing habitat for a variety of bird species in Appalachia.

"OSM and ABC are joining forces to maximize efforts to return native hardwood forests to reclaimed surface coal mine sites throughout Appalachia. Several WatchList birds of conservation concern will benefit from this effort, including the Golden-winged Warbler, which uses both early successional habitats and upper canopies of mature hardwoods, and the Cerulean Warbler, which is a mature hardwood specialist," said Darin Schroeder, ABC's Vice President for Conservation Advocacy. "When we are able to plant and nurture thousands of trees, we provide those species with a better chance of survival."

"Time and again, we have seen that when forests are made more welcoming to wildlife, the mine-reclamation process moves forward faster, and in a much more robust manner," said OSM Director Joe Pizarchik.

ABC and OSM will meet annually to identify new projects, coordinate reforestation efforts, and monitor results.

As leader of the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture, ABC has already been a significant contributor to a key program in OSM's bird conservation and reforestation effort: the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI). Created by OSM in 2004, the initiative is a coalition of federal and local agencies, non-profit organizations, private companies, and individual citizens dedicated to restoring forests on coal mined lands in the eastern United States. To date the coalition has already planted 70 million trees on 100,000 acres. It received the first Presidential Migratory Bird Stewardship Award in 2011.

Golden-winged Warblers will benefit from reforesting of formerly mined areas throughout the Appalachian region. Photo: Greg Lavaty, www.TexasTargetBirds.com

Building Owners in New Lawsuit Over Bird Collision Deaths

As a verdict in the Consilium Place trial over bird collision deaths draws closer (see *Bird Calls* Vol. 15, No. 2), a second trial in Toronto, Canada over the same issue has just begun. Cadillac Fairview Corporation, the owner of three office buildings in the city, has been charged with violating Canada's Species at Risk Act. The company has pleaded not guilty.

The charges are being brought in a private prosecution by Ecojustice, a Canadian non-profit environmental law firm. The Toronto-based non-profit Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP), which works to document and prevent bird collisions with buildings, estimates that the complex is among the most lethal in the city. The charges allege that some 800 birds were killed at the Yonge Corporate Centre buildings in 2010. Ten of these were of two species – the Canada Warbler and Olive-sided Flycatcher – that are listed as Threatened under the Canadian Species at Risk Registry, the country's equivalent of the Endangered Species List. The collisions were caused by the highly reflective glass of the buildings, which mirrors nearby trees and the sky.

Almost 30,000 birds were documented to have been killed by such collisions in Toronto between 2000 and 2010, according to FLAP. Estimates suggest the actual toll may be closer to one million, because most dead birds are not found, either flying away to die from internal injuries elsewhere, or being scavenged by animals before they can be counted.

"Cost-effective solutions now exist to greatly reduce these unnecessary deaths from collisions with buildings, and some U.S. cities, such as San Francisco, have adopted bird-safe standards to ensure they are applied. These solutions are provided in detail in ABC's new publication, *Bird Friendly Building Design*, the first national guide to building and retrofitting buildings to be safer for birds," said Dr. Christine Sheppard, ABC's Bird Collisions Campaign Manager.

The Guide will be especially helpful to architects, planners, building owners, and regulators, and is available for download and purchase at http://collisions.abcbirds.org. ABC has also created classes eligible for American Institute of Architects sustainable design credit, to instruct architects on how to design beautiful buildings that are also safe for birds.

Bird-Friendly Building Design Unveiled

Concept drawing of the Student Education Center at Ryerson University. Art courtesy of Snøhetta

A concept drawing for Ryerson University's new Student Education Center combines elegance and function while significantly reducing danger to birds. Designed by Zeidler Partnership Architects of Toronto and Snøhetta of Oslo, Norway, and New York City, the building has a targeted completion date of winter 2014.

Before the building designers were even made aware of Toronto's new bird-friendly building standards that came into effect in January 2010, they were alerted to the problems glass can pose to birds when a hawk slammed into a conference room window during a meeting. This prompted the architects to try to mitigate collisions in the new project.

Glass walls bring natural light and heat into building interiors, a goal of green design, but once a façade is more than 40% glass, costs for cooling and ventilation increase. One way to control light entering a building is to use frit, ceramic dots that block light. In most designs, frit is applied as tiny, regularly spaced dot arrays that are essentially invisible to people and to birds. However, the architects behind the new Ryerson Student Education Center used varying densities of frit to create patterns that can simultaneously make glass safer for birds.

New Interactive Map to Help Reduce Bird Mortality from Wind Development

A new, interactive, web-based map, created by ABC, is now available on ABC's website (www.abcbirds.org/extra/windmap.html), and has the potential to dramatically reduce bird impacts from wind turbines.

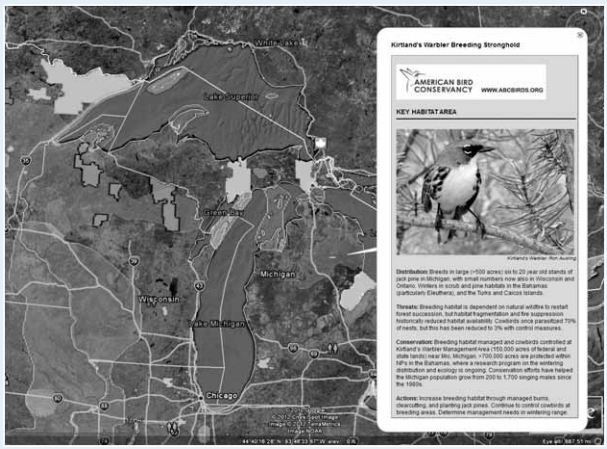
Using Google Earth as a platform, the map highlights more than 2,000 locations in the United States where birds are likely to be particularly vulnerable to impacts from wind energy development. Birds can be impacted by wind power both through direct collisions and by displacement from nesting, foraging, or transit areas. The map addresses both of these issues by identifying concentrated migratory flight paths and key habitat locations.

Key sites are color-coded to indicate their relative importance to birds. The map also provides extensive background data for each location, including details of ownership, habitats, land use, bird species, and conservation issues.

"This map offers a way to prevent millions of bird deaths from wind power while at the same time providing ample opportunity for the prudent development of this potentially bird-smart energy source. Careful siting of wind energy remains the single most important factor in reducing bird deaths from wind power, and this map provides a means to do just that," said Mike Parr, Vice President of ABC.

A recent study published in 2011 in the online, peer-reviewed journal of the Public Library of Science indicates that there is wind potential totaling approximately 3,500 GW on already-disturbed lands in the United States—more than ten times the Department of Energy's national goal for wind power generation by 2030. By focusing on these disturbed lands and avoiding the high-priority bird sites depicted on the map, the wind industry can help to minimize its impact on birds.

The sites depicted on the map include more than 500 ABC-designated Globally Important Bird Areas; 21 high-use Key Bird Migration Corridors; over 1,000 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-designated Critical Habitat Locations for 18 endangered bird species; broader Key Bird Habitat Areas that indicate range strongholds and provide data on over 50 Red WatchList birds of high conservation concern; ten priority Marine Important Bird Areas where seabirds and waterfowl congregate to forage, primarily outside the nesting season; and 25 concentration areas for Bald and Golden Eagles. The map also provides the option to download points showing the locations of more than 2,000 additional state-level IBAs identified by the National Audubon Society and its chapters.



Careful siting of wind energy remains the single most important factor in reducing bird deaths from wind power, and this map provides a means to do just that.

Mike Parr, Vice President, ABC.

The map also enables the user to view the locations of nearly 80,000 proposed wind turbines and meteorological towers (wind testing devices), and links to an average wind speed map showing the relative potential for wind energy development across different regions of the United States.

Additional or updated data will be added to the map as they become available. In 2009, prior to the recent major expansion of the wind industry in the United States, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimated that 440,000 birds were already being killed each year by collisions with turbines.

Mike Parr, ABC

Conservation Victory for One of World's Deadliest Animals

Photo: Fundación ProAves

Conservationists are celebrating the creation of a new nature reserve in Colombia that provides the first sanctuary for the endangered golden poison frog, an animal that also has the distinction of possibly being the world's most toxic animal. Although only two inches long, each golden poison frog has enough toxin to kill ten adults within minutes.

In one of the wettest tropical rainforests in the world, along the Pacific Coast of western Colombia, ABC, World Land Trust, and Global Wildlife Conservation have helped purchase 124 acres of threatened Chocó forest, creating the Rana Terribilis Amphibian Reserve named for the Spanish word for frog – *rana* – and the frog's Latin name *Phyllobates terribilis*. The reserve is owned and managed by Fundación ProAves, and will also afford protection for several key bird species including the endangered Baudó Guan, the vulnerable Brown Wood-Rail, and the vulnerable Great Curassow.

The creation of the new reserve begins an ambitious project called the Chocó Corridor that will connect many highly threatened habitats, from the mangroves on the Pacific Coast to cloud forests on the highest peaks of the western Andes. The Rana Terribilis Amphibian Reserve and Choco Corridor are supported by Conservation International, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature SSC Amphibian Specialist Group, the Beneficia Foundation, and private donors.

"Fundación ProAves and partners are truly leading the way in protecting critical habitats for amphibians, and with this latest success have effectively safeguarded a truly iconic and beautiful species in one of the richest forests in the world. Victories like this demonstrate the power in partnership," declared Robin Moore, Amphibian Program Manager at Conservation International.

The golden poison frog gets its name because of its bright orange skin that is covered by a secretion of deadly toxin. This frog produces the poison for self-defense, yet it does nothing to help its chances of survival against its single biggest threat – bulldozers. Habitat destruction continues to escalate due to illegal gold-mining (an estimated 100 bulldozers and excavators are destroying the area), and illegal logging.

Despite this frog's infamous reputation and its importance to indigenous cultures, it is considered by many to be on the edge of extinction, and until now the species was completely unprotected. Dependent on primary forest, the golden poison frog occurs patchily across an area smaller than the size of the tiny Caribbean island of Barbados. Due to its restricted range and low population, the frog was added to the list of some of the world's most imperiled creatures identified by the Alliance for Zero Extinction.

"The support from our partners made the creation of this critical new reserve possible, and one of the world's most amazing creatures, the beautiful and deadly golden poison frog, is now protected," said Lina Daza, Executive Director of Fundación ProAves.

The Great Curassow is a vulnerable bird species that can be found at the newly-established Rana Terribilis Amphibian Reserve. Photo: Greg Homel

Colombian Reserve to Double in Size, Aiding Critically Endangered Parrot

ABC, Fundación ProAves, World Land Trust-US (WLT), Robert Giles, and Loro Parque Fundación have joined forces to acquire 356 acres of land to protect the critically endangered Fuertes's Parrot and 11 other globally threatened species of birds, mammals, and amphibians. The acquisition will double the size of the existing Giles-Fuertesi Nature Reserve, which is managed by ProAves, ABC's Colombian partner and the leading conservation organization in the country.

Fuertes's Parrot is one of the world's rarest birds, likely numbering fewer than 250 individuals. Also known as the Indigo-winged Parrot, it was thought to be extinct for 90 years, but was rediscovered in 2002 when ProAves biologists, funded by an ABC grant, discovered a small population of about a dozen individuals living in fragmented and unprotected high-Andean cloud forests at the site of this reserve. The Fuertes's sole breeding habitat remains a 19-square-mile area. The main threat to their survival comes from logging of forests for farming, cattle ranching, and mining.

Fuertes's Parrot: Fundación ProAves

"The Fuertes's Parrot is endemic to Colombia and exists in the wild only at two sites, where it depends on mistletoe fruits," said Lina Daza, Executive Director of Fundación ProAves, "With our partners' support to secure private lands for its conservation, we have ensured a new and important lease of life to this wonderful parrot, and a major step away from the abyss of extinction."

Since the Fuertes's Parrot was rediscovered, ABC, ProAves, and WLT have worked hard to protect its tiny range. In 2004, ProAves conducted a pilot nest box project that was a huge success thanks to the support of Loro Parque Fundación. By early 2005, 23 pairs of the parrots were nesting in these boxes, all successfully raising broods. In 2009, the Giles-Fuertesi Reserve was established.

ProAves and other conservation groups have established a series of reserves known collectively as the Threatened Parrot Corridor, which includes one municipal and three private reserves, all managed by ProAves. With the new additions, these reserves conserve over 18,000 acres of key habitat, and protect approximately 70 percent of the Fuertes's Parrot population, as well as populations of four other species of imperiled parrots: the Yellow-eared Parrot, Rusty-faced Parrot, the Golden-plumed Parakeet, and the Rufous-fronted Parakeet.

The Giles-Fuertesi Reserve provides essential habitat for many endangered birds and other animals. Photo: Fundación ProAves

BIRDS IN BRIEF

Largest Old-Growth Stand in Tongass Threatened

According to the report *America's Rainforest at Risk* by Audubon Alaska (see www.ak.audubon.org), the remaining old-growth trees in the Tongass National Forest are in peril. Sealaska Corp. is seeking legislation that would enable them to gain control of federal lands and potentially clear-cut 17 percent of the forest's large, old-growth trees. The Tongass is an ABC-designated Globally Important Bird Area, and home to hundreds of species of birds, including the Bald Eagle, Marbled Murrelet, and Northern Goshawk. It also contains much of the world's remaining temperate rainforest.

Today, only 82,000 acres of the very largest old-growth forests remain on the Tongass as a result of past logging practices that targeted the largest trees. The legislation remains under discussion in the U.S. Senate.

Whooping Crane Struggles to Reach Target Population

A new study by researchers at Texas A&M University and The Crane Trust estimates that the population of endangered Whooping Cranes appears unlikely to reach target levels of 1,000 individuals before the year 2060, or 25 years later than the 2035 date identified in the Whooping Crane Recovery Plan.

According to the study, which appeared in the *Journal of Field Ornithology*, the Whooping Crane population growth will drop off significantly, and may only reach about 700 birds by 2035, instead of the 1,000-bird figure believed to be a threshold level (along with 250 breeding pairs) that could trigger downlisting the species from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Even the reduced figures are based on assumptions that may turn out to be optimistic, such as rainfall, temperature, and freshwater inflow continuing at historic levels, unchanging land-use patterns, and marshland near Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, where the birds winter, remaining available.

Reasons for the lower growth rate include the species' sensitivity to overcrowding at their wintering grounds, inability to adapt to changing conditions, and their low rates of dispersal.

Bahama Oriole: Carleton Ward

Bahama Park System Changes will Benefit Oriole

The critically endangered Bahama Oriole may benefit from the significant expansion of the Andros West Side National Park. The Andros Islands are the last remaining stronghold for the oriole. While poorly surveyed for the species, the western portion of these islands is relatively untouched, and could provide important habitat for fledgling and non-breeding birds. The expansion will also ensure the protection of an interesting mosaic of Caribbean habitat, including inshore intertidal pools, pine, second-growth, and mangrove forests, sea grass beds, coral reefs and sand flats.

George Gentry, USFWS

Sonoran Bald Eagle Will Not Receive ESA Protection

After a review of scientific and commercial information, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has found that the Sonoran Desert Area population of the Bald Eagle does not qualify as a "Distinct Population Segment (DPS)", and hence does not qualify for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

FWS further determined that even if the Sonoran Desert Bald Eagle population were a listable entity, listing would not be warranted because current threats were not sufficiently high.

FWS had been ordered by a court to review its 2006 decision not to list the Sonoran population, which resulted from a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity. The Service completed a 12-month finding in 2010, and issued its final decision in September 2011.

All populations of the Bald Eagle continue to be protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Is Rare Albatross Now Colonizing Hawaii?

Back-to-back successful breeding efforts by rare Short-tailed Albatrosses at Midway Atoll, combined with ten other sightings at several other Northwestern Hawaiian Islands during the breeding season, have conservationists hopeful that we are witnessing

the initial stages of a new U.S. breeding colony in the archipelago.

The Short-tailed Albatross once numbered more than a million birds, but due to over-hunting for the feather trade, was thought to be extinct by the late 1940s. In the early 1950s, ten pairs were discovered breeding on the island of Torishima, Japan, and thanks to conservation efforts, the population has now reached 3,000 individuals, with most still on Torishima. But an eruption of the active volcano there could spell disaster for the species, and so for the last five years, the Short-

Short-tailed Albatross: J Klavitter, USFWS

tailed Albatross Recovery Team, an international group of collaborators, has been working on establishing a new colony on Mukojima Island, also in Japan, which is safe from volcanic activity. In 2011, however, a pair nested successfully at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (see *Bird Calls* Vol. 15, No. 3), the first ever U.S. breeding record. The same pair nested this year.

Mongoose Trapped on Kaua'i

A mongoose has been captured on Kaua'i, Hawai'i, prompting fears for the island's remaining native birds. The small Indian mongoose was introduced to the Hawaiian Islands in 1883 to control rats in cane fields. It did little to help the rat problem, but had a significant negative impact on ground-nesting seabirds, waterbirds,

Mongoose: Bill Hubick

and other birds on the Big Island, O'ahu, Maui, and Moloka'i. Kaua'i and Lāna'i were the only main Hawaiian islands where mongooses were not intentionally introduced, and as a consequence, bird species vulnerable to mongoose depredation, such as the Nēnē and Hawaiian Coot, are doing relatively well there. Nonetheless, mongooses, probably hitching a ride on ships, have occurred on Kaua'i, with more than 70 credible reports in the past decade. Until now, the mongoose has apparently not become established, but a recent spate of credible sightings and the capture of a live mongoose this May at a hotel near Lihu'e increase the likelihood that they have finally begun breeding on Kaua'i. The Kaua'i Invasive Species Committee is leading an intensive trapping effort and has asked for reports of all mongoose sightings.

Oregon Lawsuit Filed to Protect Marbled Murrelets

On May 31, 2012, Cascadia Wildlands, the Center for Biological Diversity, and the Audubon Society of Portland filed a lawsuit in federal court charging that the State of Oregon's clear-cutting practices are violating the U.S. Endangered Species Act in harming threatened Marbled Murrelets within the Tillamook, Clatsop, and Elliott State Forests. The murrelets spend most of their lives on the ocean, but come inland to nest in mature and old-growth forests. The conservation organizations are calling on Governor John Kitzhaber to develop a plan for state forests that will adequately protect these rare seabirds.

"The state of Oregon is out of touch with the values of Oregonians by ignoring the dire needs of species teetering on the brink of extinction, like marbled murrelets," said Francis Eatherington, conservation director of Cascadia Wildlands. "Governor Kitzhaber has to step up and call for the development of a long-term, science-based plan for these forests that doesn't result in an ongoing decline of the imperiled seabird."

The lawsuit presents evidence that logging on the three state forests, which cover nearly 600,000 acres within the murrelet's range, are harming the birds by destroying and fragmenting their nesting habitat. Although the state does survey for murrelets and establishes "reserves" where they are found, these reserves often do not include all of the habitat needed by the species. The state also allows logging in the reserves, and surrounds them with clearcuts. This further degrades the value of the reserves to murrelets by making the trees more vulnerable to high winds, and enables increased access by nest predators such as jays and crows.

Alaska Dept of Fish and Game

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Marbled Murrelets have been declining at approximately four percent per year.

Unregulated pesticides. Poorly sited wind farms. Lead ammunition and fishing gear. Glass buildings and cell towers. Oil spills. Unchecked logging.

Threats such as these kill millions of birds every year.

American Bird Conservancy is the only U.S.-based organization working to eliminate threats to all birds in the Americas—and we need your help.

More often than not, it can take years to achieve results for birds. Staying the course is one of the secrets to ABC's success. For example, it was in 1997 when ABC first began its campaign to help protect the *rufa* Red Knot, and its main food source, horseshoe crab eggs. Just last year, thanks to advocacy efforts by ABC and its partners, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decided to expedite the listing of the *rufa* Red Knot under the Endangered Species Act, and give this species the formal protection it needs.

Many of the problems we face require long-term strategies. It may take a decade or more to end lead poisoning in birds caused by spent hunting ammunition and fishing gear. With your support today, you can be assured ABC's conservation advocacy efforts will continue until the job is done, remaining vigilant, and ensuring more birds are protected from human-caused threats.

You can help protect birds from these threats by donating today using the enclosed envelope, or online at **www.abcbirds.org.**

Turbines, glass, tower: Mike Parr; Red Knots: ClipArt.com