



Shaping the future for birds

Bird Conservation Updates – February 2016

Congressman Lowenthal Introduces Bill To Protect Imperiled Seabirds

Congressman Alan Lowenthal (CA-47) today introduced new legislation that will protect imperiled seabirds from international fishing threats and increase ongoing conservation efforts in the United States and abroad. The Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act would implement the international Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), a conservation agreement that has been signed by thirteen member countries since 2001. President George W. Bush first asked the U.S. Senate to ratify the agreement in 2008, and while President Barack Obama has listed it as a priority, the Senate has yet to take action.

“By signing and implementing the ACAP agreement, the U.S. can urge other nations to adopt strong conservation standards and can take steps to ensure that foreign fishing vessels follow international conservation measures that protect endangered seabirds,” Congressman Lowenthal said. “I hope that my legislation will get the ball rolling because this is a golden opportunity for the United States to improve wildlife conservation not just here at home, but around the world.”

American Bird Conservancy Vice President Darin Schroeder added, “ACAP is the foremost international agreement bringing countries together to reduce threats and ensure the future existence of highly imperiled albatrosses and petrels, and so we wish to thank Congressman Lowenthal for his leadership in introducing this important legislation.” ABC will be circulating an action alert when the bill number is available.

[Sign-on Letter](#) in Support of Presidential Memorandum on Mitigation

The Presidential Memorandum issued on November 3, 2015 titled, “Mitigating Impacts on Natural Resources from Development and Encouraging Related Private Investment,” has potential to be a far-reaching conservation policy to avoid, minimize, and compensate for development impacts to public lands and wildlife.

A [sign-on letter](#) to the Senate Energy Committee is now being circulated in support of the President’s mitigation memorandum. The Committee is expected to hold a hearing on this policy in the near future. **If you would like to sign on for your organization by close of business Friday, February 12, please contact me with the organization name at sholmer@abcbirds.org. Thanks for taking a look!**

Grouse Plans Acknowledge Wind Power Disturbance Threat

Following ABC support for wind development exclusion areas to protect sage-grouse, we are pleased to see that BLM has acknowledged the threat to Sage-Grouse from wind development, and has restricted wind development on 35 million acres of habitat in western states. Sage-grouse avoid tall structures such as wind turbines and their associated transmission lines as they could provide perches for raptors that prey on grouse and their chicks.

A recent memo from the President that addresses mitigation and compensation for development projects provides further encouragement that additional wind development and transmission projects in sage habitats will also have to take grouse into consideration in their planning and mitigation actions. ABC sent a [letter](#) to the President with our initial thoughts on the policy. ABC's work on bird-smart wind is supported by the Leon Levy Foundation.

[Groups Urge BLM to Protect Greater Sage-Grouse from Mining](#)

More than 80 bird and habitat-conservation organizations have signed a comment letter supporting a proposed 10-million acre mineral withdrawal to protect Greater Sage-Grouse habitat from hard rock mining. The letter also urges the Bureau of Land Management to go further. [Read More>>](#)

Tennessee Petitions to Protect Forests from Coal Mining

American Bird Conservancy [commented in support](#) of the State of Tennessee petition to designate over 67,000 acres within the Royal Blue Wildlife Management Area as unsuitable for coal mining. The petition area provides valuable habitat for birds such as Cerulean Warbler and could be significantly damaged by surface coal mining operations. Our thanks to The Tennessee Ornithological Society for bringing this conservation opportunity to our attention.

2016 Saving Endangered Species Youth Art Contest

The 2016 Saving Endangered Species Youth Art Contest is open for submissions. The competition, an integral part of the 11th annual national Endangered Species Day celebration, provides school children in grades K through 12 an opportunity to learn about threatened and endangered wildlife while expressing their knowledge and support for conservation efforts through their artistic and creative talents. For more information, including entry categories, judging criteria, prizes, and the entry form, visit www.endangeredspeciesday.org. Entries must be submitted electronically no later than March 1, 2016.

Feral Cat Report on PBS News Hour

Grant Sizemore, ABC's director of invasive species programs, appeared on PBS News Hour, representing ABC in a news report about feral cats. You can learn more here: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/why-activists-are-fighting-over-feral-felines-2/>

Forest Carbon State Toolkit

The Forest Climate Working Group, a coalition for forest landowners, industry and conservationists, has developed recommendations that can be applied at the state level to keep forests as forests, and support actions to boost carbon sequestration. You can find the toolkit online at <https://www.forestfoundation.org/state-policy-recommendations-forest-carbon>.

Bird Festivals in 2016 Near National Wildlife Refuges

[Click here](#) to see a list of bird festivals near refuges compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Expansion of Brazilian "Songbird Forest" Reserve Protects Some of the World's Rarest Birds

The Brazilian conservation group Fundação Biodiversitas, with support from American Bird Conservancy, has secured a tract of vital Atlantic Forest habitat for the [Stresemann's Bristlefront](#), listed as Critically Endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and other rare species. [Read More>>](#)