



Inside Bird Conservation – March 2016

BLM Targets Open Pipes and Mining Claim Markers to Reduce Bird Deaths

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently took action to reduce a serious threat to birds, issuing a memorandum to its field offices across the nation with [guidance on how to eliminate the threat of open pipes](#) on public lands. Open pipes, such as uncapped PVC pipes used to mark mining claims, are death traps for hundreds of thousands of birds and other wildlife each year. Animals become trapped inside the pipes and, unable to escape, starve or die of dehydration. More than 3 million mining claims use these pipes as boundary markers.

“This is a small change that will make a big difference,” said BLM Director Neil Kornze. “Too often birds, bats, lizards, snakes, and small mammals find themselves unable to escape from pipes and vents.”

The memorandum calls for BLM staff to identify all vertical pipes on BLM-managed lands and to cap, close, remove, or screen them to prevent wildlife from becoming trapped. In addition, all vertical pipes on future facilities must have permanent caps or screens to prevent harm to wildlife. Mine-claim holders are also being encouraged to voluntarily remove PVC pipes used as mine markers and to replace them with wildlife-safe markers.

“This is a positive step in the right direction,” said Steve Holmer, Senior Policy Advisor for American Bird Conservancy, which has long advocated for eliminating this threat to birds on public lands. In June, more than [100 groups led by American Bird Conservancy sent a joint letter](#) to the BLM and the USDA Forest Service, asking the two agencies to accelerate efforts to address this longstanding threat to birds. [Read more.](#)

Agreement for Seabirds Gets Another Look in Congress

Seabirds like the Short-tailed Albatross are among the most threatened bird species in the world—and a priority for ABC. The Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act, introduced in the U.S. Congress by Rep. Alan Lowenthal of California, aims to increase international efforts to protect these imperiled birds. Albatrosses and petrels are among the world’s most threatened birds. Seabirds like the Short-tailed Albatross face a gamut of threats at sea and on land, including accidental death in longline fishing gear, loss of eggs and chicks to introduced predators on breeding islands, and ingestion of plastic trash.

Please help seabirds by contacting Congress and urging support for the **Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act of 2016 (HR 4480)**. This legislation could represent a historic step forward in the

conservation of these magnificent birds, but we need your help. [Click on this link](#) to send your letters today.

Presidential Memorandum on Mitigation Advances

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](#) from conservation groups to the Senate Energy Committee in support of the mitigation memorandum was submitted for a March hearing, where strong opposition to the mitigation policy was heard from Chairman Lisa Murkowski.

ABC opines that [bird conservation benefits](#) from the better balance with development that mitigation ensures. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has released its [revised draft mitigation policy](#) for public comment.

For Rare Hawaiian Birds, Cats are Unwelcome Neighbors

When Europeans brought cats to Hawai‘i, they probably had no idea what havoc would result. Last year alone, officials at a Hawaiian refuge discovered that cats had killed at least 237 endangered birds, including Hawaiian Stilt and Hawaiian Common Gallinule. Endangered Newell’s Shearwater (shown) is another victim of cat attacks.

[Read why cats are unwelcome neighbors for rare Hawaiian birds.](#)



More about Cats

Feral cat legislative update. Did you know that feral cat activists are introducing bills in states across the country to legalize and require public funding of trap, neuter, release (TNR) programs? Legislators, misinformed by TNR proponents, fail to understand the conservation or wildlife and public health

implications of the bills they are persuaded to introduce. Such bills have been introduced in Delaware, Maryland, New York, Nevada, and Virginia, to name a few.

ABC and its partners are working hard to educate legislators to support common-sense solutions that support the reduction of feral and free-roaming cat populations without harming wildlife and public health. But we need your help! Will you be an advocate for conservation? Please help ABC by familiarizing yourself with your state's introduced bills and writing or calling state legislators to tell them to support a responsible reduction in free-roaming cats. If you would like to work more closely with ABC, please contact Grant Sizemore at gsizemore@abcbirds.org.

Save the birds: Don't let cats roam free, Canadian campaign urges. Nature Canada has launched a "[Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives](#)" campaign, which is asking cat owners to make an online pledge not to let their cats roam free outdoors. Cats are [by far the leading human-linked cause of death for birds in Canada](#), reported a 2013 Environment Canada report that estimated 200 million bird deaths a year from pet and feral cats across the country. And outdoor life is also a deadly and unnecessary risk for cats, says Ted Cheskey, Senior Manager of Nature Canada.

Feral Cat reports by Center for Investigative Reporting. Two reports on the issue of feral cats and trap, neuter, release include a [radio broadcast](#) and [television segment for PBS Newshour](#). Stay tuned for information on a future [full-length documentary](#).

In Other News ...

Beautiful Film on Hawaiian Petrel Translocation

Please take a few minutes to watch a compelling short film on a recent translocation of endangered Hawaiian Petrels. It features breathtaking footage of the Kaua'i landscape and up-close shots of the petrel chicks in their new home. This film, like the translocation project it chronicles, involved a huge team effort among many partner organizations. [Watch now](#).

Birds Hitting Windows? Make Your Windows Bird-Smart!

Up to one billion birds are killed each year when they hit windows in the United States. Since spring bird migration is a peak time for birds hitting windows, it's time to take action! [Try one of these easy ways](#) to make your windows "bird smart."

Watch Loggerhead Shrike Video

A video will air on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's weekly show on TX PBS channels in April and again in October featuring lots of baby shrike shots, along with ABC's James J. Giocomo, PhD, Coordinator of the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture. [Watch footage](#).

See a Mesmerizing Migration Map

Watch the wonder and spectacle of bird migration captured on a single map. Using millions of bird observations from participants in eBird and the Great Backyard Bird Count, scientists at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology generated an animated map showing the annual journeys of 118 bird species.

Watch how the routes change in spring and fall as birds ride seasonal winds to their international destinations. [See the map in motion and read more.](#)

Westside Project Threatens Over 100 Northern Spotted Owls in California

Fourteen timber sales in the Klamath National Forest approved by the USDA Forest Service late last month have received permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to take up to 103 Northern Spotted Owls, a subspecies already in steep decline. [Read more.](#)

Conservation Birding: See It, Save It

American Bird Conservancy and partners remind all birders of the Conservation Birding website, which enables birders to find lodges and birding trails that contribute to bird conservation in the Americas. So [please browse the reserves and routes](#) featured on the top left menu, go birding, and save species!



Help Protect the El Oro Parakeet

“El oro” means gold in Spanish and is an appropriate way to describe the El Oro Parakeet of Ecuador. With fewer than 1,000 birds remaining, this special bird is even rarer than its namesake precious metal—and it needs your help today.

The El Oro Parakeet is surviving in southwest Ecuador largely because of the habitat provided by Buenaventura Reserve—the only area in this region that is assured protection from deforestation. Lands around the reserve are highly sought after for grazing cattle, and the reserve itself is becoming a forested island amidst a sea of pastures. This reality has inspired American Bird Conservancy, World Land Trust, and other groups to invest heavily over the past several years in helping our local partner, Jocotoco Foundation, to expand the reserve to its current size of 5,583 acres.

[Will you join our global campaign by making a donation to save the El Oro Parakeet?](#)
