



*Inside Bird Conservation* – February 2017

## [Over 300 Conservation Groups Support Together for Birds](#)

We now face a critical moment. The environment was not a major issue in the recent election, but decisions made by the new Administration and Congress could have far-reaching impacts for birds and their habitats. That's why we need everyone who cares about birds to join together and [sign our petition](#) to protect cornerstone conservation legislation such as the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Over 300 bird clubs, bird rehabilitation centers, bird conservation organizations, and habitat protection groups have endorsed the Together for Birds Petition. To add your organization, please visit [Together for Birds](#) and fill in the name of your institution in the box provided.

### **Congress Needs to Hear from You – Please Act Now!**

Congress is currently considering [rolling back environmental protections](#) and making major budget cuts that could greatly hinder or even eliminate effective bird conservation programs. American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is working to educate lawmakers about bird conservation funding priorities and legislative opportunities (see factsheets below).

Please lend your voice and ask your senators and representative to support funding for bird conservation and to oppose harmful legislative changes that threaten endangered species and bird habitats on public lands. [Click here](#) to send letters to your senators and representative today. Additional information about bird conservation threats and opportunities is available on these two factsheets:

[Bird Conservation Issues and Opportunities for the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress](#)

[Bird Conservation Funding Priorities for the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress](#)

---

## **EPA Risk Assessments for Neonicotinoid Pesticides Don't Include Birds**

While ABC is pleased that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has [released](#) its preliminary risk assessments for four neonicotinoids—imidacloprid, clothianidin, thiamethoxam, and dinotefuran—

we were very disappointed that EPA has again pushed back any plans for reviewing the threat of these pesticides to birds. As a 2013 ABC [report](#) concluded, a single seed coated with a neonic is enough to kill a songbird.

The new EPA risk assessments make only peripheral mention of such neonic-coated seeds, which are used on over 100 million acres of cropland. And while the agency emphasizes that it is adjusting its timelines in order to synchronize its neonic risk assessments, it has still not addressed the need for a cumulative risk assessment of these pesticides—in spite of the fact that ABC's 2015 congressional cafeteria [study](#) found as many as five different neonics concurrently on single food items. It is worth noting that EPA's aquatic risk assessment for the neonic imidacloprid acknowledges many of the same high exposures and elevated risks found by Canada and Europe, both of which have robust plans to phase out these dangerous pesticides.

EPA is opening a 60-day comment period on its risk assessments for imidacloprid, clothianidin, thiamethoxam, and dinotefuran. (See detailed review schedules [here](#).) ABC will be reviewing the assessments closely and submitting further comments.

### **This Green Earth: Jan. 17, 2107 Interview with ABC's Cynthia Palmer on pesticides**

<http://kpcw.org/post/green-earth-january-17-2017#stream/0>

---

## **Lead Use to be Phased Out Over Five Years on National Wildlife Refuges**

The outgoing director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a directive on Jan. 19 for the agency to begin working with states and partners to accelerate the phase-out of the use of lead ammunition and fishing sinkers on National Wildlife Refuges. Lead presents a significant threat to birds such as the California Condor and other species such as eagles that can ingest lead while feeding on deer and other game carcasses that contain residual lead. Seed-eating bird species may also ingest spent lead shot while foraging, and lead sinkers can be a significant source of lead poisoning for loons.

The directive (<https://www.fws.gov/policy/do219.html>) states:

“Ingested lead pellets from shotgun shells have been a common source of lead poisoning in birds. The Service recognized the problem of avian exposure to lead shot used for waterfowl hunting and enacted restrictions in 1991 and hunting and waterfowl populations have thrived since.

The use of lead ammunition continues for other forms of hunting, presenting an ongoing risk to upland or terrestrial migratory birds and other species that ingest spent shot directly from the ground or as a result of predating or scavenging carcasses that have been killed with lead ammunition and left in the field. Many states have enacted nontoxic shot and ammunition requirements to address this concern.”

We at ABC are committed to reducing threats to birds, and believe that a reduction in lead use on federal lands is a positive step for bird conservation. We're committed to collaborating with the Service, state agencies, and our other partners to address this important issue. And we recognize that authority for regulation or use of lead in hunting and fishing also lies with our friends at state wildlife

agencies; we stand ready to help them as they move toward a financially feasible, less toxic future for our wildlife.

### **Conservation a Bridge between Hunters, Bird Watchers**

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/outdoors/article/Conservation-a-bridge-between-hunters-bird-10851594.php>

---

---

## **NRCS, USFWS Partner to Accelerate Conservation for the Monarch Butterfly**

The [monarch butterfly](#) is a new national priority species of [Working Lands for Wildlife](#) (WLFW), a partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Populations of monarchs, a pollinator species cherished across North America, have declined significantly during the past two decades. This collaboration aims to help the species recover by working with agricultural producers to make wildlife-friendly improvements on their farms, ranches, and forests.

"Producers can make simple and inexpensive tweaks on working lands that provide monumental benefits to monarch butterflies and a variety of other insects and wildlife," said NRCS Chief Jason Weller. "By adding the monarch to Working Lands for Wildlife, we can accelerate conservation for the species at the heart of its migration corridor."

NRCS and USFWS recently completed a [conference report](#) that explains how conservation practices can help the eastern monarch population, a species known for its remarkable annual and multi-generational migration between central Mexico and the United States and Canada.

Several ABC-led conservation partnerships are cooperating with this and other habitat conservation projects in the region. "Many of the conservation practices we are promoting to help declining grassland bird populations, like planting native grasses and using prescribed fire, also benefit Monarch Butterflies and other pollinators," said ABC's Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture Coordinator Jim Giocomo. "By working together we are creating a win-win situation for many of our grassland species in peril."

A host of midwestern bird species including Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and Northern Bobwhite will benefit from the WLFW program. [The Central Hardwoods Joint Venture](#), led by ABC's Jane Fitzgerald, is cooperating with this and other habitat conservation projects in the Midwest region.

In Texas and Oklahoma, bird species that benefit from habitat conservation work include Painted Bunting, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Black-capped Vireo, and Northern Bobwhite. [The Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture](#) and [The Rio Grande Joint Venture](#), led by ABC's Aimee Roberson, are cooperating with this and other grassland habitat conservation projects in portions of Texas and Oklahoma.

## **USDA Announces \$252 Million Available for Regional Conservation Partnership Program**

Conservation partners, including private industry, non-government organizations, Indian tribes, state and local governments, water districts, and universities, are now invited by USDA to submit project applications for federal funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will award up to \$252 million dollars to locally driven, public-private partnerships that improve the nation's water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat, and protect agricultural viability. Applicants must match or exceed the federal award with private or local funds.

Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, RCPP connects partners with producers and private landowners to design and implement voluntary conservation solutions that benefit natural resources, agriculture, and the economy. By 2018, NRCS and its more than 2,000 conservation partners will have invested at least \$2.4 billion in high-impact RCPP projects nationwide.

### **[Bringing Back Diversity in Eastern Forests for Landowners, Wildlife](#)**

[USDA.gov \(press release and blog\)](#), Dec 29, 2016. The AMJV is working with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), **American Bird Conservancy** and more than a dozen other...

---

### **Expansion of Cascade-Siskiyou Monument Protects Biodiversity, Spotted Owls**

Before leaving office, President Obama [expanded the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument](#) in southwestern Oregon and Northern California. The 48,000-acre expansion builds on the original monument's goal to protect the area's extraordinary biodiversity. Established in 2000, Cascade-Siskiyou was the first monument designated solely for the preservation of its biodiversity. It is an ecological wonder, home to an incredible variety of rare and endemic plant and animal species, and representing a rich mosaic of forests, grasslands, shrub lands, and wet meadows at the convergence of three mountain ranges.

Several years ago, local scientists sounded the alarm that in the face of mounting external pressures, including encroaching development and climate change, the original monument boundary was too small to sustain the diverse array of species it was established to protect. The expansion, which includes a 5,000-acre extension into California, provides vital habitat connectivity.

---

### **[American Bird Conservancy Founder to Step Down](#)**

Leading Bird Conservation Group Seeks New Leader in 2017

Twenty-three years after founding American Bird Conservancy, [George Fenwick](#) is stepping down as the group's president. He leaves behind an organization with an international reputation for conserving habitat and combating the most serious threats to native birds throughout the Americas.

Thanks to the leadership of Fenwick and his wife, Rita Fenwick, Vice President of Development, ABC's next president will inherit an organization that is financially sound, with a four-star rating from Charity

Navigator, a staff of more than 75 employees, and a growing network of partnerships throughout the Americas that deliver impressive conservation results for the hemisphere's most threatened birds.

"In the last twenty 20 years, nobody in the world has done more for birds than George and Rita Fenwick," said author Jonathan Franzen, an avid birder and member of ABC's Board of Directors. "They created a scientifically rigorous and passionately activist organization that fills a vital niche in the conservation landscape, taking a holistic approach to protecting the birds of the Western Hemisphere in all their diversity and splendor. Under their leadership, ABC has become a model of how to do conservation right."

ABC has engaged Koya Leadership Partners to partner with the Search Committee of the Board to identify and recruit its new president. Koya invites interested parties to learn more about this opportunity by visiting its website: [www.koyapartners.com](http://www.koyapartners.com). ABC hopes to have a new president in place by summer 2017.

### **ABC Videos Advancing Bird Conservation**

Here are links to videos produced by ABC's [Aditi Desai](#)'s in collaboration with staff:

- Stop Birds from Hitting Windows PSA, <https://youtu.be/isZTxQoJ5Zs>
- Mapping Migration, <https://youtu.be/Wcx5og8Qr8k>
- Save Migration, <https://youtu.be/nxwpCxT9BQk>
- ABC Helps Hummingbirds, <https://youtu.be/AfEIHxilCeY>

### **Cats Indoors Updates and Alerts newsletter**

To subscribe please click [HERE](#) and fill out the form.

### **CNN: Rare Albatross Dying by Eating Plastic Debris**

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/12/11/world/vanishing-walsh-plastic-albatross/index.html>

---

## **Report Finds the ESA Working**

[\*The Endangered Species Act: A Record of Success\*](#) found that 41 birds listed under the ESA have increasing populations, and several have grown more than tenfold since being listed.

### **ABC Blog: Endangered Species Act Facing Its Own Extinction?**

<https://abcbirds.org/endangered-species-act-facing-own-extinction/>

### **The Washington Post: GOP Targets ESA for Major Changes**

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/energy-environment/gop-targets-landmark-endangered-species-act-for-big-changes/2017/01/17/91abc4a0-dc7f-11e6-8902-610fe486791c\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.553d8298f327](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/energy-environment/gop-targets-landmark-endangered-species-act-for-big-changes/2017/01/17/91abc4a0-dc7f-11e6-8902-610fe486791c_story.html?utm_term=.553d8298f327)

### **TIME: Republicans Plan to Roll Back Parts of the Landmark Endangered Species Act**

<http://time.com/4636033/republicans-gop-endangered-species/>

**Huffington Post: It's Time to Stop Shortchanging Endangered Species**

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/5873acb7e4b0eb9e49bfd71?timestamp=1483976660295>

**Motherboard: Can Species Be Saved Without the Endangered Species Act?**

[Read the full story](#)

**Dan Ashe: For the Sage Grouse, Much Is at Stake in the Coming Year**

<http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/4785862-155/for-the-sage-grouse-much-is>

---

## **Collisions News**

**NPR: How to Make Broadcast Towers More Bird Friendly**

<http://www.npr.org/2017/01/24/510811662/how-to-make-broadcast-towers-more-bird-friendly-turn-off-some-lights?ft=nprml&f=1003%2C1004>

**Detroit Free Press: Birds get a boost from Michigan findings on cell phone tower hazards**

<http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2017/01/02/birds-get-boost-michigan-findings-cell-phone-tower-hazards/95713486/>

**Legal News: Research in State Prompts Changes in Cell Phone Towers**

<http://www.legalnews.com/oakland/1437099/>

---