



Bringing back the birds

Inside Bird Conservation – April 2017

Standing Together for Birds – Your Support Needed to Boost Outreach Efforts

The conservation of birds and their habitats is under threat as never before. Hundreds of groups joined together to endorse the [Together for Birds Petition](#) in support of bird conservation. Much more needs to be done. In response to threatened budget cuts and environmental rollbacks, ABC is embarking on an aggressive advocacy and organizing campaign in support of migratory bird conservation. [Your organization can help](#) make this outreach initiative a success by contributing and by taking part in ABC's ongoing advocacy efforts for bird conservation.

Please make a donation today [by clicking here](#).

Please Join the Bird Conservation Alliance: If your organization is not a member of the [Bird Conservation Alliance](#), a coalition of 220 conservation groups supporting bird conservation, please sign up by [clicking here](#).

[Chlorpyrifos on Track to Poison Birds and People for the Next 5 Years](#)

Chlorpyrifos, one of the most-used pesticides in the United States, has been killing birds and poisoning the environment for the past half-century. Because of those risks to wildlife and to human health, ABC has been calling for a ban on the use of chlorpyrifos for years. Environmental Protection Agency scientists agreed and were on course to ban the pesticide this month. But EPA chief Scott Pruitt rejected the conclusion of the agency's own pesticide experts, who had recommended that EPA permanently forbid use of the pesticide at farms nationwide. Rebuffing a petition filed by environmental groups a decade ago, Mr. Pruitt took "final agency action," which may not be revisited until 2022.

"We're disgusted by Mr. Pruitt's decision to yield to corporate interests, given the dangers posed by chlorpyrifos to birds, children, and agricultural workers," said Cynthia Palmer, Pesticide Program Director at American Bird Conservancy.

[President's Budget Threatens Bird Conservation and Public Lands](#)

President Trump's proposed 2018 budget would gut major programs and protections for birds and for America's public lands, and put decades of conservation work at risk. A large coalition of conservation groups [have weighed in against the cuts](#), and American Bird Conservancy urges all Americans who care about our nation's wildlife and natural resources to tell Congress that such extreme cuts will not fly. Bird lovers can speak out and contact their Senators and Representative by [clicking here](#).

Advocacy Resources

[“Together for Birds” Petition to Congress Endorsed by 424 Conservation and Birding Groups](#)
[Bird Conservation Issues in the 115th Congress](#)
[Bird Conservation Funding Priorities for the 115th Congress](#)
[Bird Conservation Winter Edition](#)

Please Join Us May 9 to Celebrate and Protect Migratory Birds!

Conservation groups are reaching out to Congress to build support for birds, public lands, and our environment. Please join American Bird Conservancy, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Ducks Unlimited at a legislative briefing followed by a reception and migratory bird photo show sponsored by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (RI). When: Tuesday, May 9, 2017, 2-4:30 pm (legislative briefing), 5-7 pm (reception). Where: SR-325 Kennedy Caucus Room (Russell Senate Office Building), 2 Constitution Ave NE, Washington, DC. **Please RSVP [here](#)** by May 3rd.

ABC Launches Hawai'i Bird Conservation Funding Initiative

With 90 percent of its native species found nowhere else, Hawai'i hosts an incredible diversity of endemic birds and wildlife. But since humans' arrival, over 90 Hawai'ian bird species have become extinct, making the islands the bird extinction capital of the world. And those that survive are in serious trouble. In fact, more than one-third of all bird species listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act are native to Hawai'i.

To tackle Hawai'i's bird extinction crisis, Congress needs to support conservation efforts, and we're asking that it create a \$20 million fund to do exactly that. These resources are urgently needed to maintain and expand successful recovery efforts for endangered Hawaiian bird species and to meet the growing threat of invasive species.

[Please write your elected officials today](#) in support of recovering Hawaii's endangered birds! [Your organization can also endorse this letter by adding your name in the appropriate field.](#)

[New Study Supports the Rarity and Limited Range of a Kauai Endemic Bird](#)

A new study provides the first rigorous population estimate of the Puaiohi or Small Kauai Thrush, an enigmatic endangered bird species found only on Kauai: 494 birds. Scientists have long believed that the species was very rare, but it had heretofore eluded a precise count because of its secretive demeanor and the rugged, inaccessible terrain it inhabits deep in Kauai's Alakai Plateau.

Groups Urge Statewide Habitat Inventory for Rare Hawaiian Owl

The Pueo or Hawaiian Short-eared Owl is an important member of Hawai'i's biological community and a culturally critical species. However, very little is known about this species' population abundance, distribution, or movements statewide. Although there are pockets that have many owls, such as the fields of Mauna Kea, the owls seem to be rare throughout most of the state, and are listed by the State as Endangered on O'ahu.

There are active research and management programs for most of our forest birds, water birds, and seabirds, but the Pueo has fallen through the cracks. The best recent estimate, from the State's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan, could only guess at the population trends and thought they were declining. Conservation Council for Hawai'i [and ABC are calling for a habitat inventory](#) as a critical first step to beginning to properly protect and manage the Pueo – a bird found nowhere else besides the Hawaiian Islands.

[Bird Groups Sue to Stop Lake Erie Wind Project](#)

ABC and Black Swamp Bird Observatory have filed a lawsuit against the Ohio Air National Guard (ANG) over its plans to build and operate a wind turbine at its Camp Perry facility. Located in Port Clinton, Ohio, on the shore of Lake Erie, Camp Perry lies in a major bird migration corridor, close to numerous Bald Eagle nests, and wind energy development there is likely to kill species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) such as Kirtland's Warbler and Piping Plover.

Filed in U.S. District Court, [the complaint](#) alleges that the Camp Perry project violates the ESA and other federal laws protecting wildlife and the environment. "To have a government agency disregard the government's own guidelines is not acceptable and, if left unchallenged, could encourage others to follow suit," said Mike Parr, ABC's Chief Conservation Officer.

A recent [radar study](#) by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service found excessively high risks to birds and bats from wind turbines placed along the shores of the Great Lakes. "The Great Lakes region—the site of one of the world's greatest confluences of migratory birds and bats—is perhaps the worst possible place for wind energy development," said Michael Hutchins, Director of ABC's [Bird-Smart Wind Energy Program](#).

ABC Raises Concerns With Eagle Rule and Industry Effort to Hide Mortality Data

ABC continues to raise concerns with the proposed 30-year eagle take rule with FWS. ABC has also filed an [amicus brief](#) in a case where Iberdrola is seeking to be able to hide bird-mortality data from the public.

American Bird Conservancy's Statement on Trump's Clean Power Plan Rollback

"American Bird Conservancy is extremely concerned that further deregulation of energy development, especially of the rapidly growing wind industry, will be a disaster for bird conservation," said Michael Hutchins of American Bird Conservancy. "Wind energy development can be done using [bird-smart strategies](#) that avoid risky locations and mitigate for impacts. People love birds and public lands and do not want to see them squandered."

FWS Director's Lead Phase Out Order Lifted by Secretary of the Interior Zinke

[A January 2017 directive](#) issued by then-Director Dan Ashe called for a five-year timeline to require use of nontoxics for hunting and fishing on National Wildlife Refuges by January 2022, as well as a collaborative process with State Fish and Wildlife agencies to address implementing this policy. In addition, the Assistant Director of Migratory Birds was directed to consult with flyway councils and the States to establish a process to phase in requirements for use of nontoxic ammunition for mourning doves and other upland game birds. These steps appeared to be both inclusive and deliberate and therefore reasonable to American Bird Conservancy, so we are disappointed by [the repeal](#) of the directive by Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke.

ABC Perspective: Lead Preventing Full Recovery of the Endangered California Condor

The California Condor could be fully recovered, with a much larger population inhabiting much of its historic range. That range once extended north as far as Oregon; the Lewis and Clark Expedition of the early 19th century reported on their sighting and shooting of California condors near the mouth of the Columbia River. By the 1980s, Condors had been the victims of poisoning campaigns and direct shootings and of incidental lead poisoning, until only 22 birds were left in the wild.

Thanks to a ban on lead ammunition in California, the number of condors with extreme lead exposure declined from a peak of 60 percent in 2006 to a recent average of about 30 percent. While that's a definite improvement, it is still not enough to recover the condor population.

The problem is continued noncompliance with the ban in California, and a lack of a ban in Arizona and Utah, where avoiding the use of lead shot is voluntary. In addition to limiting recovery, lead poisoning is keeping the cost of the Condor recovery program extremely high because of the need to recapture the birds and remove the lead from their blood.

Adding to the need for a broader lead ban is the condor's ongoing recovery of its historic range. The Yurok Tribe, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are currently planning to reintroduce condors at Redwood National Park.

"We're trying to get some birds into center of the historical range, which hopefully will lead to getting the birds to expand further into the northern portion of the historical range," says Yurok wildlife biologist Chris West. The northern range includes Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, places that because of lead could be potentially deadly places to be a condor.

ABC is recommending a rapid ban on lead ammunition within the historic range of the California Condor and a transition to nontoxic materials within five years, led by Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, the states involved, and sportmen's groups.

Proponents of continued use of lead ammunition argue that, other than its documented impact on the Condor, it doesn't show any population-level effects, and therefore is not a significant problem. We disagree. To reverse current broad-scale declines of numerous species, all significant sources of mortality should be reduced or eliminated to the extent possible.

There are also major obstacles to accurately documenting population-level effects with lead. First, dosed birds may behave in ways that make them more likely to die from other causes (collisions, electrocution, being killed by a predator) than directly from lead exposure. Unless someone tests every bird that is killed by a car for lead exposure, the link between lead exposure and common types of mortality will often go unnoticed. Second, birds that die directly from lead exposure are likely to do so in remote locations where their carcasses won't be found. Third, sub-lethal effects of lead may not kill birds outright but result in lower reproduction or survival.

In general, parsing out the population-level effects of ANY factor when multiple factors are contributing to a decline (which is almost always the way things occur) is difficult, and there is no consensus within the scientific community on how to do this. Proving that something on its own is having a population-level effect is a very high bar that can rarely be met. If that's the threshold to initiate preventative actions on lead, we are probably not going to see significant movement to address the problem outside the range of the Condor.

Hunters are killing eagles—but not by shooting them

(McClatchy Washington Bureau) "Humans too are at risk from ingesting lead found in game: The Peregrine Foundation, a bird conservation organization, found that there are bullet fragments in 26 to 60 percent of ground venison that has been commercially processed, and people who eat..."

More Insight on Getting the Lead Out

Pheasants Forever magazine ran an article, "[The Evolution of Steel](#)" by Greg Breining, which explains the technicalities, pluses, and minuses of steel shot. Breining presents solid arguments and background that can make a real contribution to the discussion over "getting the lead out." [Birding Community E-bulletin - March 2017](#)

Bald Eagles: Scientists decry overturn of ban that would save American symbol

(The Guardian) "The national bird is threatened by toxic bullets that wind up in the animals it eats..."

NEWS REVIEW

American Bird Conservancy and Cornell Lab of Ornithology Join Forces

Two leading bird conservation groups, American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, have launched "Science to Action," a partnership aimed at reversing decades of population declines for migratory birds in the Americas. Bringing together the Cornell ... [Read More>>](#)

Video Gallery: Grey-breasted Parakeet

Illegal trafficking has taken a toll on the Grey-breasted Parakeet. Watch video clips of this rare species and learn what you can do to help conserve them.... [Read more >>](#)

[Can Biotechnology Stop Hawai'i's Invasive Mosquitoes?](#)

Non-native, invasive mosquitoes spread avian malaria and other diseases among Hawai'i's struggling forest birds. Can biotechnology help?... [Read more >>](#)

[ABC Opinion: Cats are not the answer to D.C.'s rat problem](#)

(The Washington Post) "A new program from the District of Columbia's animal control services, the Humane Rescue Alliance, proposes to tackle the city's rat population by throwing cats at the problem."

[Live Interview About Cats With ABC's Grant Sizemore](#)

Watch ABC's Director of Invasive Species Programs, Grant Sizemore, discuss how cats impact bird populations and ABC's new film documenting the experiences of wildlife rehabilitators and their cat-attacked patients.

[Parasite spread by feral cats threatens endangered species](#)

(The Maui News) Lissa Fox Strohecker of the Maui Invasive Species Council reminded readers of the threat of infection with *Toxoplasma gondii* as a result of free-roaming cats.

Worldwide Industry, NGSs Advocate for Policy Changes in Tuna Fisheries

[\(SEAFOOD NEWS\)](#) A diverse, global group of commercial and non-profit organizations has joined the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation's (ISSF) call for immediate improvements on tuna management, including developing harvest strategies, strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance tools, and improving the management of fish aggregating devices (FADs). A March 21 [outreach letter](#) to four tuna Regional Fishing Management Organizations (RFMO) was co-signed by 83 nongovernment organizations, tuna processing companies, fleet associations, retailers, importers and food service operators.

[DOI Announces \\$3.74 Million to 12 States for Species Recovery](#)

(Department of Interior News Release) Through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Cooperative Recovery Initiative (CRI) more than \$3.74 million is being committed to nine projects across 12 states to help recover some of the nation's most at-risk species on or near national wildlife refuges. "We are targeting our work where it will do the most good for America's resources," said FWS Acting Director Jim Kurth. "This initiative is a unique way to engage in conservation work with states and partners, giving the taxpayer a good return on investment."

[All Three Eagle Chicks, the Ones on Live Video, Are Looking Good](#)

The eagle triplets, the ones on live video streamed by the Minnesota DNR, it looks like they all might make it. Bald Eagles don't often successfully raise three babies, according to Carrol Henderson, supervisor of the DNR's non-game department. "It's amazing how our eagle numbers continue to increase," Henderson said, "and that their nests are so widely occurring in so many places "that we formerly would not have considered eagle habitat—like in suburban backyards."

With that in mind, Henderson said, people with housecats should be cautious about letting those animals outside. Cats are small enough for eagles to capture and kill. "If owners value their cats, they shouldn't allow them to roam, or they could be the next prey items viewers see on the nest video feed," he said. He also warned about coyotes, ever more abundant in neighborhoods city or suburban. He called cats "fast-food for coyotes." Find the eagle video stream at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/features/webcams/eaglecam/index.html>

Conservationists Release Bird Study of Glassy Minnesota Stadium

The new glass-happy U.S. Bank Stadium is back in the news again, as the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis released [a report](#) observing bird mortality and injury at the complex during the fall 2016 migration season. Based on the recent fall 2016 study, the Audubon is again calling on the MSFA to implement "specific immediate actions to reduce bird collisions at the stadium." The report suggests it consider American Bird Conservancy-recommended retrofitting options, including the application of window film; decals and tape; nettings, screens and exterior shades; and awnings and overhangs.

Kansas and Nebraska Farmers Submit Bids to Enroll in New USDA Practice

The newly established Migratory Bird, Butterfly, and Pollinator Habitat State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (Migratory Bird SAFE) practice was recently announced in Kansas and Nebraska, with up to 10,000 acres available for enrollment in each state. (Birding Wire, March 8).

Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation Workshop Presentations Available

This February 2017 workshop, organized by the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan, included 18 concurrent presentations, five plenary sessions, and two expert panel discussions, as well as three case studies. [Presentations are available here.](#)