



August 30, 2017

Dear [Representative],

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and National Audubon Society, we wish to raise your attention to two bipartisan pieces of legislation essential for the conservation of migratory birds: the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act and the Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act.

Migratory birds provide tremendous value to millions of Americans. They also make a significant contribution to the US economy. The [\*2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation\*](#), conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, reports that out of nearly 47 million birdwatchers in the United States, 41 million are around-the-home observers who spend over \$4 billion on bird feed and nearly \$1 billion on nest boxes, bird houses, and bird feeders annually.

[\*The State of North America's Birds 2016 report\*](#), the first-ever conservation assessment for all 1,154 native bird species that occur in Canada, the continental United States, and Mexico, signaled an urgent need to increase bird conservation efforts. Of these species, 432 qualified for the Watch List, indicating species of highest conservation concern. This assessment shows that one-third of all North American bird species need urgent conservation action. The following bills are critical to conserving our nation's birdlife by protecting and restoring habitat, reducing threats, and expanding partnerships and cooperation for habitat conservation.

**Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act:** H.R. 3598, Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA) and Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI)

Since 2002, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) has functioned as a matching grant program to fund projects that conserve neotropical migratory birds--those that breed in or migrate through the United States and Canada and spend the non-breeding season in Latin America and the Caribbean. Funding for NMBCA includes partnership programs to conserve these 400 species, representing more than 4 billion birds, including some of the most endangered birds in North America.

NMBCA has a proven track record of success over more than a decade. Since its inception, the program has received more than \$58 million to positively affect 4.2 million acres and partners have leveraged federal funds with more than \$221 million in non-federal contributions – nearly a four-to-one match ratio. All NMBCA grant requests must be matched with non-federal funds at least 3 to 1.

Rep. Wittman and Rep. Kind have introduced H.R. 3598 to reauthorize the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA). Now called the Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Act, the bill would authorize \$6.5 million per year through 2023 to help conserve these species. ABC and Audubon recommend passage of H.R. 3598 and urge you to cosponsor the bill, and support full funding for the program.

**Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act:** H.R. 2542, Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL) and Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-VA)

Up to 1 billion birds die annually in the United States from striking buildings, bridges, and other manmade structures. Unaltered glass is one of the primary causes of this mortality. Rep. Quigley and Rep. Griffith have introduced the Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act (H.R. 2542) to help address these needless deaths by requiring federal buildings to incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features. The legislation is cost-neutral and would apply to new or acquired federal buildings and major renovations, and exempts historic buildings.

ABC and Audubon recommend passage of this legislation, and ask that you cosponsor the Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act.

America faces a serious challenge to reverse the decline of many of our bird species. Birds are sensitive indicators of how we are protecting our environment as a whole, so this decline signals a broader crisis that Congress should act on and help reverse. ABC and Audubon strongly believe that advancing these bills and fully investing in bird conservation programs will be essential to achieving our nation's conservation goals that are critical to supporting our environment and our economy.

Sincerely,



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