



Bringing back the birds

Inside Bird Conservation – December 2017

[Take Action: Congress Can Make Federal Buildings Bird-Safe](#)

As many as a billion birds a year are killed in the United States when they collide with glass. But that may be changing. Sen. Cory A. Booker (D-NJ) has introduced the Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act, which would require new federal buildings to incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features. ABC supports Senator Booker's Act and is building grassroots support for this critical legislation.

[Learn more about the Act and find out which birds are most threatened by glass collisions.](#)

Stronger Measures Needed to Conserve Sage-Grouse

Conserving Greater Sage-Grouse requires more habitat protection, not less. That's the message conservation groups are delivering to the administration as it considers revisions to the landmark 2015 Greater Sage-Grouse conservation planning initiative. The revisions, if enacted, would come at too high a cost to the sage-grouse and the remaining sagebrush habitat on public lands, sending the future of both the bird and its iconic landscape back into uncertainty.

John Fitzpatrick, Director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, said: "This ill-timed revision of federal sage-grouse management plans, before they have had a chance to work, runs counter to the best available science." The Greater Sage-Grouse has become a wildly popular and iconic symbol of the American West and its wide-open sagebrush basins. Year after year, sage-grouse gather in the spring at small arenas in the sagebrush called leks to dance, display, and mate. Their mating dance is one of the great natural spectacles of the West.

"Because of these proposed backward-looking changes, and new energy projects on public lands in the region, grouse populations are once again at risk of extinction and in need of stronger protection," said Steve Holmer, American Bird Conservancy's Vice President of Policy. "The stability and certainty provided to local communities and land users by the federal management plans and other grouse conservation measures are now at risk of being lost."

Take Action: Protect Migratory Birds and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Congress is currently considering actions which could undermine the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the protection of migratory birds. The House Energy Bill, H.R. 4239, would make it difficult, if not impossible, to protect birds from being trapped in oil pits or electrocuted by power lines.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed the creation of an incidental take permitting system to reduce the loss of birds by applying best management practices and mitigating for unavoidable losses. For example, the agency has been requiring oil and gas companies to cover open oil pits to prevent birds from falling in and drowning in oil.

This should be a non-partisan issue, and both Democrats and Republicans have raised objections to the proposal in the energy bill. You can support the birds and tell Congress to oppose drastic changes to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act by accessing this letter page from American Bird Conservancy: <https://abcbirds.org/action/petition-mbta>

Take Action: Towers Turning Off Dangerous Lights – You Can Help Speed the Transition

We are very encouraged by the progress we are seeing across the country to have tall towers turn off the steady-burning lights that attract birds. Since May of this year, approximately 9 percent of the tall towers over 350 feet have turned off their steady-burning red lights!

And now we have the [Songbird Saver website](#) that can help speed up this process even more by helping activists write letters to the operators of the remaining towers that need to turn off their lights. [Songbird Saver Teams](https://www.songbirdsaver.org/team) (<https://www.songbirdsaver.org/team>) are forming to encourage tower owners to turn off the steady-burning red lights and reduce bird collisions by as much as 70 percent.

The Federal Aviation Administration has studied the airline safety issue and, along with the Federal Communication Commission, is actively encouraging this change. Please consider signing up for a team in your region and having your organization adopt the towers in your area.

[Top 10 Myths About Wind Energy and Birds](#)

Wind energy is another form of industrial development, and we can't ignore its costs and consequences to wildlife and their habitats. ... [Read more >>](#)

[For Birds, The Sky Isn't Just Empty Airspace. It's Habitat.](#)

By Jennifer Howard, November 13, 2017

Look up. All that empty space over our heads isn't so empty. Many birds, bats, and insects spend a good part of their lives up in the air, foraging, mating, and migrating. Aerial insectivores such as swallows and swifts feed almost exclusively on the wing.

[Why The Endangered Species Act Is Vital for Bird Conservation](#)

Now is the time for people who love wildlife to speak up on behalf of this important federal law.... [Read more >>](#)

[Cross-border Conservation Restores Vital Habitat for Birds of the Rio Grande](#)

The beautiful and diverse birds of the Rio Grande region move freely across the landscape, unaware of the political borders that divide the United States and Mexico. More than 700 species occur in this area, including at least 50 that show some combination of population declines, limited geographic

distributions, or distinct threats to habitat. But the riparian forests, brushlands, grasslands, and desert these birds depend on face significant threats along both sides of the Rio Grande. The Rio Grande Joint Venture (RGJV) — a partnership of conservation organizations that collaborate to protect and restore habitat for birds — is tackling these challenges, working in cooperation with a management board of state, federal, and nongovernmental organizations from two countries. ABC staff lead the RGJV with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Source: <https://www.environmentguru.com/pages/elements/element.aspx?id=5771074> © EnvironmentGuru.com

[Stick Up For Local Birds By Taking This One Simple Action](#)

As a partner member of the [Allegheny Bird Conservation Alliance](#), we were thrilled to work for months to make the Frick Environmental Center safe for park birds. Birds, often viewed by visitors on rainy or snowy days through the floor-to-ceiling glass panes, were at risk of colliding with and being injured by these same windows.

[Vilcanota Polylepis Tree Planting](#)

ECOAN organized their annual Queuna Raymi tree-planting festival, planting a total of 48,000 *Polylepis* saplings in two days at two communities. See [ECOAN's facebook page](#) for great photos and videos. They have one more day of planting scheduled before the end of the year, and may exceed 100,000 trees total planted during this December campaign.

[National Forests in the South Join Bobwhite Quail Restoration Effort](#)

The U.S. Forest Service's Southern Region has joined with the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI) in efforts to restore wild bobwhite quail at the landscape level in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Mississippi. (Birding Wire)

In the News

Raleigh News Observer: [New Laws Should Address the Hazards Feral Cats Pose to Birds and Humans](#)

Minneapolis Star-Tribune: [list of TNR-related legislation.](#)

Des Moines Register: [Will Des Moines skyscraper be death trap for birds?](#)

Bangor Daily-News: [How to Help Maine Birds.](#)

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: [quotes ABC's Cynthia Palmer](#) in story on pesticide drift.

Naples Daily-News and many other outlets: [Ghostly image on car](#), quotes ABC's Chris Sheppard.