



Inside Bird Conservation – May 2018

[Be a Cats Indoors Ambassador](#)

Do you support keeping cats indoors, on a leash, or otherwise contained? We want to hear about it! American Bird Conservancy is seeking enthusiastic volunteers to tell their stories and/or feature their safely contained cats. Do you have photos or videos of your cat walking on a leash, chasing a laser, or enjoying other responsible behaviors? We want to see them! Your submission could be showcased on American Bird Conservancy's website or social media!

Please send submissions to American Bird Conservancy by June 1 at [This Location](#). We are interested in hearing your story of why keeping cats safely contained is important to you (in 250 words or less), and seeing photos or videos of your cat enjoying life indoors or otherwise safely contained. We can only use high-quality photos (at least 300 dpi) or high-resolution, steady-camera videos.

New Model Free-Roaming Cats Ordinance Language Available

Do you know the laws in your city, county, or state? Are free-roaming cats effectively managed where you live? If you are unsure or the answer is no, it may be time to update the local ordinances. **Become an advocate with American Bird Conservancy's [model ordinance language](#) to safeguard your community.** Use the language as written, or modify it to suit your needs. Important topics include sterilization, licensing, running-at-large, and abandonment. This model ordinance was designed to avoid common companion-animal conflicts and support the health and welfare of cats, wildlife, and people. [Check it out!](#)

NOAA Marine Fisheries Tackles Toxoplasmosis

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, concerned about the effects of the disease toxoplasmosis on endangered Hawaiian monk seals, has released a [new fact sheet](#) in an attempt to shine a light on the disease in Hawaii. According to NOAA scientists, eight seals have died from infection with the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis. The parasite is spread in cat feces, which flows through the ecosystem and into the marine environment where seals are infected. The environmental contamination is not only concerning for seals but also all other warm-blooded animals -- including people -- that live in and recreate in the same areas.

Hawaii Bill Promoting Trap, Neuter, Release Defeated

In a victory for Hawaiian wildlife conservation, Hawaii [House Bill 2593](#) failed to make it out of the Senate Committee on Judiciary this session after passing the House and making it through a joint meeting of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee and Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental,

and Military Affairs. The bill would have legalized keeping feral cat colonies throughout the islands and would have provided extraordinary legal exemptions for feral cat “caretakers.” Feral cats are a major threat to the state’s endangered species. The bill was opposed by American Bird Conservancy, the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Additional Cats Indoors Resources

[Lanai Cat Sanctuary blog](#), [Lion in the Living Room blog](#), [Wildlife Rehabilitation blog](#), [Essay: Do a little. Save a lot, Cats, Birds, and You brochures](#), [Cats Indoors pledge](#)

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Lawsuits Target Oil, Gas Leases Threatening Sage Grouse in Five States

Conservation groups have filed a lawsuit challenging Trump administration policies that weaken protections for imperiled Greater Sage Grouse and allow oil and gas leases on nearly 2 million acres of the birds’ prime habitat. The suit says the Bureau of Land Management violated the National Environmental Policy Act and Federal Lands Policy and Management Act when it approved eight massive oil and gas lease sales in Nevada, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho. The suit was brought on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity and the Western Watersheds Project, represented by Advocates for the West. A similar suit was also filed by the Montana Wildlife Federation, the Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society, and the National Wildlife Federation, represented by Earthjustice.

California Protects Tricolored Blackbirds

The California Fish and Game Commission has voted to protect [Tricolored Blackbirds](#) as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act. Tricolored Blackbirds have declined by nearly 90 percent since the 1930s. Comprehensive statewide surveys found only 145,000 of the birds in 2014 — the smallest population ever recorded. The 2017 survey appears to show a small population rebound, with 177,656 blackbirds observed. The population increase came only after legal protections were put in place in 2016, and scientists caution that one year of data cannot be relied on to show population stability. (Center for Biological Diversity)

[American Bird Conservancy Petitions to Have Oregon Vesper Sparrow Listed](#)

American Bird Conservancy has submitted a petition to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to list the Oregon Vesper Sparrow as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The petition cites several factors: a small population size and significant population declines, breeding and wintering range contractions and many local extirpations, ongoing habitat loss and degradation, negative impacts from a variety of threats, and lack of adequate protection by existing regulatory mechanisms. These factors, and the best available scientific data to support them, portray a bird that is highly imperiled and threatened with extinction throughout its range.

Our thanks to Bob Altman for drafting this petition, and for his decades of outstanding service conserving birds. Bob retired from ABC at the end of 2017.

Black-Capped Vireo Delisted from Endangered Species Act

Thanks to robust conservation efforts, the black-capped vireo, a small songbird, is being removed from the list of endangered and threatened species. From a low of only 350 birds in the late 1980s, the population has recovered to an estimated 14,000 birds across the breeding range of Oklahoma, Texas, and Mexico. (Birding Wire)

American Bird Conservancy is encouraged by the progress made in recovery of the Black-capped Vireo allowing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to remove the species from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. Given the ever changing conditions that could affect the long term status of the Black-capped Vireo, particularly given its restricted range, we urge the Service to be diligent in ensuring a robust monitoring program. Although the monitoring protocol developed to track the Black-capped Vireo population status is suitable, the lack of identified funding could put implementation of monitoring at risk.

Kirtland's Warbler Fully Recovered, Thanks to the Endangered Species Act

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will propose delisting the endangered Kirtland's Warbler, a gray and yellow songbird that ranges from the Great Lakes to the Bahamas. The bird was one of the original species listed under the Endangered Species Act and over the last 50 years has improved from about 200 breeding males to nearly 2,400 today. (Birding Wire)

"We're heartened that Kirtland's Warbler — after more than 50 years on the Endangered Species list — is a candidate for delisting," says Shawn Graff, Vice President of the Great Lakes Region for American Bird Conservancy. "The population has increased five-fold since the early 1950s due to intensive habitat management in this species' very small breeding range. The signs are good for continued recovery, though with delisting will come the need for ongoing robust monitoring, habitat management and a plan to deal with cowbird parasitism. We are optimistic that the draft Post-delisting Monitoring Plan will be released soon that addresses these issues."

[From puffins to owls: One in eight bird species threatened with extinction, claims new study](#)

A new study shows one in eight bird species worldwide may be threatened with extinction, and cites multiples causes including the expansion of intensive agriculture. Overall 40 percent of bird species are in decline, the study found; 44 percent are stable, 7 percent are on the rise, with trends for the remaining 8 percent unknown, BirdLife reported. [The State of the World's Birds](#), a five-year compendium of population data from the best-studied group of animals on the planet, reveals a biodiversity crisis driven by the expansion and intensification of agriculture. In all, 74 percent of 1,469 globally threatened birds are affected primarily by farming. Logging, invasive species and hunting are the other main threats." [Jon Sharman](#), Monday 23 April 2018

[Northwestern University Takes Action to Make Buildings Bird-Friendly](#)

Working with the local community and experts from American Bird Conservancy, Northwestern University is using state-of-the-art solutions to keep birds from dying in collisions with glass walls and windows. The measures put Northwestern in the vanguard of a growing movement among U.S. colleges

and universities to implement practical and effective ways to avoid collisions which kill up to 1 billion birds a year in the U.S. alone.

Presenting Your Crystal Ball for Bird Migration

If you've ever been tempted to ditch your morning appointments and go bird watching, Cornell's BirdCast project has something for you. Good birding conditions depend on wind, weather, geography, temperature, and timing—a complicated mix that BirdCast now boils down into two simple tools: a three-day forecast and near-live maps of nighttime migration activity. [Check out the BirdCast site](#) or visit [a guide on how to use the new tools](#).

[Ten Spring Migration Tips to Help Birds on Their Way](#)

All of us can take steps to make migration a little safer. Find the solutions that work for you.... [Read more >>](#)

[Congressional Budget Delivers Benefits for Birds](#)

The \$1.3 trillion spending agreement reached by Congress contains good news for birds and bird conservation. Legislators increased funding for [State of the Birds](#) activities to \$3 million, giving a boost to the conservation of endangered forest birds in Hawaii, including the creation of safe nesting areas. Congress also indicated that funding levels for work to support migratory bird conservation will remain at or be set above 2017 levels. *Our thanks to all who wrote their Senators and Representatives.*

[U.S. Should Follow European Union Lead to Ban Neonicotinoid Pesticides](#)

In a move that illustrates growing awareness of the toxicity of the world's most widely used class of pesticides, the European Union has [voted to ban](#) almost all outdoor uses of three neonicotinoids due to their buildup in the environment, particularly in waterways, and the persistent harm that they pose to bees and other pollinators. The ban on imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam is set to go into effect by the end of 2018.

"We've known these chemicals are wiping out wildlife for five years now, but the EPA has yet to take action," said Holmer. "We urge citizens to speak out in support of a legislative effort, the Saving America's Pollinators Act, H.R. 5015, to restrict the most harmful neonicotinoid pesticides."

Pesticides: ABC sent a letter of support to California legislators in support of AB2422

Since the California Department of Pesticide Regulation pulled second-generation anticoagulants from consumer shelves in 2014, there has been no decrease in the rate of wildlife poisoning, thanks to a loophole that allows their continued use. Assembly member Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica) has introduced legislation, AB 2422, to ban first- and second-generation anticoagulants that are responsible for these wildlife deaths. Northern Spotted Owls, San Joaquin kit foxes, and Pacific fishers are among the threatened species being endangered by these poisons, as is the California Spotted Owl, which is now being considered for Endangered Species Act protection.

USGS Releases New Comprehensive Map and Database of U.S. Wind Turbines

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the DOE, in partnership with DOE's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and AWEA, released the [United States Wind Turbine Database](#) (USWTDB) and the [USWTDB Viewer](#) that give access a new public dataset and allow users to view locations and details of wind turbines in the U.S. The USWTDB provides the locations of U.S. land-based and offshore wind turbines, corresponding wind project information, and turbine technical specifications.

[Winds of change calmed: PGC declares moratorium on wind turbines](#)

After rejecting 19 of 19 proposals for wind turbines since 2005, the Pennsylvania Game Commission has unanimously approved a moratorium on wind energy developments on its 1.5 million acres of state game lands. Standard Speaker

[Six Stunning Hummingbirds in 90 Seconds](#)

From Costa's to Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, these six diminutive species are among those found at American Bird Conservancy's Bird Reserve Network. Marvelous Spatuletail is one of the rarest, numbering fewer than 1,000 individuals. Please enjoy, then consider supporting our work to conserve bird habitat! Sign up for ABC's Bird of the Week: Test your knowledge... [Read more >>](#)

[In Southern Ecuador, Shade Coffee and Bird Conservation Go Hand in Hand](#)

As promising partnerships between coffee farmers and bird conservationists show, their respective goals of growing flavorful coffee beans and conserving declining bird species have much in common.... [Read more >>](#)

[Island Birds, Unique and Vulnerable, Need Our Help](#)

History tells us that islands are the epicenters of extinction. Yet we also have the tools and the knowledge to save island birds and make them beacons of conservation success.... [Read more >>](#)

[Taking Back Seabirds' Island Strongholds](#)

Populations of seabirds have plummeted as non-native predators overrun their nesting grounds. But the very trait that makes seabirds vulnerable — their tendency to nest in isolated, closely packed colonies — also provides the greatest opportunity to save them. We're using this to our advantage in Hawai'i and elsewhere by working with partners to protect and restore critical nesting sites.