

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

CONSERVATION

IMPACT SCORECARD 2019



This American Bird Conservancy (ABC) Conservation Impact Scorecard provides an “at-a-glance” summary of ABC’s cumulative conservation actions and outcomes. It provides conservation metrics in three sections according to the main components of ABC’s strategic bird conservation framework. (See the right-hand column on this page, and the pyramid-shaped graphic on the reverse, for more information.)

Not all programs lend themselves easily to quantitative scoring, and we believe that it is important that we not allow ease of measurability to drive priority-setting away from important but less easily counted actions (such as training, capacity-building, and sustainability).

Other critical aspects of our work, such as commitment to our mission, our integrity, and our dedication, will likely never be fully measurable in quantitative terms, but we hope that these qualities nevertheless shine through from these pages.

Working in partnership is the bedrock of ABC’s organizational philosophy, and ABC is one of multiple partners engaged in almost all of the activities outlined here. Listed outcomes and actions in this scorecard are those in which ABC played a leading or significant role in the particular accomplishment. We are extremely grateful to all the donors and partners we have worked with over the past 24 years and want to acknowledge that ABC’s accomplishments would not be possible without the collective efforts of these groups. A full list of partners and supporters is included in our current online Annual Report, which can be found at: abcbirds.org/results/annual-reports/.

A more extensive version of this scorecard is available on our website at abcbirds.org/scorecard.

Summary of the Status of Birds and Bird Conservation in the Americas, by ABC Framework Component

1. ENDANGERED BIRDS

There have been 13 bird extinctions in the Americas over the past 50 years (most in Hawaii). Today, the majority of endangered birds outside the U.S. have at least some populations in protected areas, but significant gaps remain, and only 18% of the most threatened species can be considered effectively protected from extinction at present. In the U.S., more endangered birds are increasing than are declining, but Hawaiian species in particular need much more recovery support.

2. BIRDS OF CONSERVATION CONCERN

While waterfowl and raptor populations have responded very positively to conservation action, most other groups of birds are still showing significant long-term declines, and a substantial increase in resources is needed to help these species follow waterfowl back to robust population levels. Many effective habitat conservation projects are demonstrating that this can be done, and some bird groups (such as grassland birds) are showing recent signs of positive response as a result.

3. THREATS TO ALL BIRDS

Despite huge concern from the public, substantial challenges remain in reducing and mitigating many of the most significant sources of bird mortality. Changes in lighting on communication towers and the marking of electrical lines to stop bird collisions are just two great examples of what can be done, but overall, bird concerns are still under-valued, and the bird community must unite to help encourage and incentivize positive change.

TOP: Horned Lark by Ashok Khosla





STATUS OF BIRDS

There have been 13 bird species extinctions in the Americas during the past 50 years, and 5 more bird species have been declared extinct in the wild but still survive in captivity. BirdLife International scientists believe that an additional **7 bird extinctions have been averted by conservation intervention** since 1994.

In 2016, an ABC report documented that

38 BIRD SPECIES LISTED UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA) IN THE U.S. WERE INCREASING,

15 were stable, 24 were declining, and 17 were of uncertain status or extinct (most of these being Hawaiian species already close to extinction in 1973 when the Act was passed).

In the Americas, there are currently 279 Endangered (EN) and Critically Endangered (CR) bird species on the IUCN Red List.

Habitat loss is considered the principal threat for 209 of these. The remaining 70 species are primarily threatened by other factors, such as invasive species.



ABC helped to create the first reserve for the Critically Endangered Marsh Antwren with partner SAVE Brasil.



AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY RESPONSE

CONSERVATION OUTCOMES



Of the 209 EN and CR birds primarily threatened by habitat loss, ABC-supported projects (such as bird reserves) currently provide some **protected habitat for 82 species** (39%). Extinction risk is believed to have been significantly reduced for 14 of these species so far.

ABC currently works on 23 of the species threatened primarily by invasive species or other factors – mostly seabirds and Hawaiian birds.

Of the 20 ESA-listed bird species that ABC has worked on most directly, **7 were considered to be increasing** in a 2016 ABC report.

Of the 7 bird species extinctions considered to have been averted since 1994 in the Americas, ABC has significantly contributed to preventing 4:

- JUNIN GREBE
- GRENADA DOVE
- PALE-HEADED BRUSHFINCH
- LEAR'S MACAW



ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

In total, **2,900 bird species** have been recorded in ABC-supported reserves (66% of all bird species found in the Americas).

In 2018, our partner ECOAN and ABC supported the protection of more than **45,000 acres of cloud forest in northern Peru**, sheltering Long-whiskered Owlet and other rare birds.

A record **12 Blue-throated Macaw chicks fledged from nest boxes** at the ABC-supported Laney Rickman Reserve in Bolivia during the 2018-2019 nesting season, bringing the total of fledglings produced by our partner Asociación Armonía's nest boxes to 81.

With partners, ABC has supported the acquisition/protection of 1,075,145 acres of land at 100 sites in 15 countries, with 38 partners. We have also supported the planting of 6,076,112 trees and shrubs in reserves and buffer areas.



1,075,145 - ACRES ACQUIRED/PROTECTED
6,076,112 - TREES AND SHRUBS PLANTED

= Fewer Bird Species

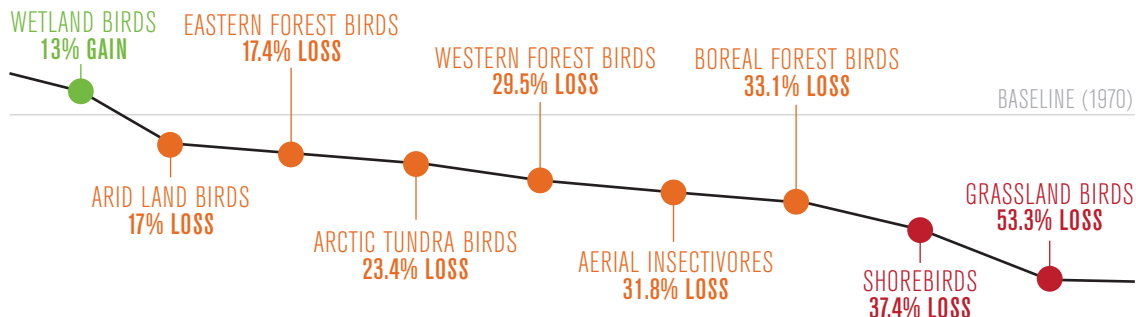
TOP: Marsh Antwren by Elvis Japão; ABOVE: Blue-throated Macaw by Gerrit Vyn





STATUS OF BIRDS

Breeding Bird Survey and Christmas Bird Count data show that since 1970, there has been an approximate **3 billion overall loss** of birds from the North American breeding population. Further, the U.S. WatchList identifies 270 specific bird species and subspecies as being of particular conservation concern. Comparable data has not yet been developed for the Americas as a whole.



AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY RESPONSE

CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

To address declining bird populations, ABC has initially identified **94 priority BirdScapes** through which we are delivering, or plan to deliver, large landscape-scale habitat conservation projects to stabilize and restore migratory and other bird populations (ABC is currently active in 24 of these BirdScapes).

Six examples are provided on the following page.

In the U.S., ABC works extensively with Migratory Bird Joint Ventures (JVs) and their partners to conserve bird habitat. The total area with improved management implemented by JV partners in JVs where ABC staff played a significant role in planning and/or conservation delivery from 2007 to 2018 was 7.6 million acres. (Acreage data is calculated yearly. This Scorecard reflects acreage data through 2018.)



7.6 MILLION ACRES

with improved conservation management

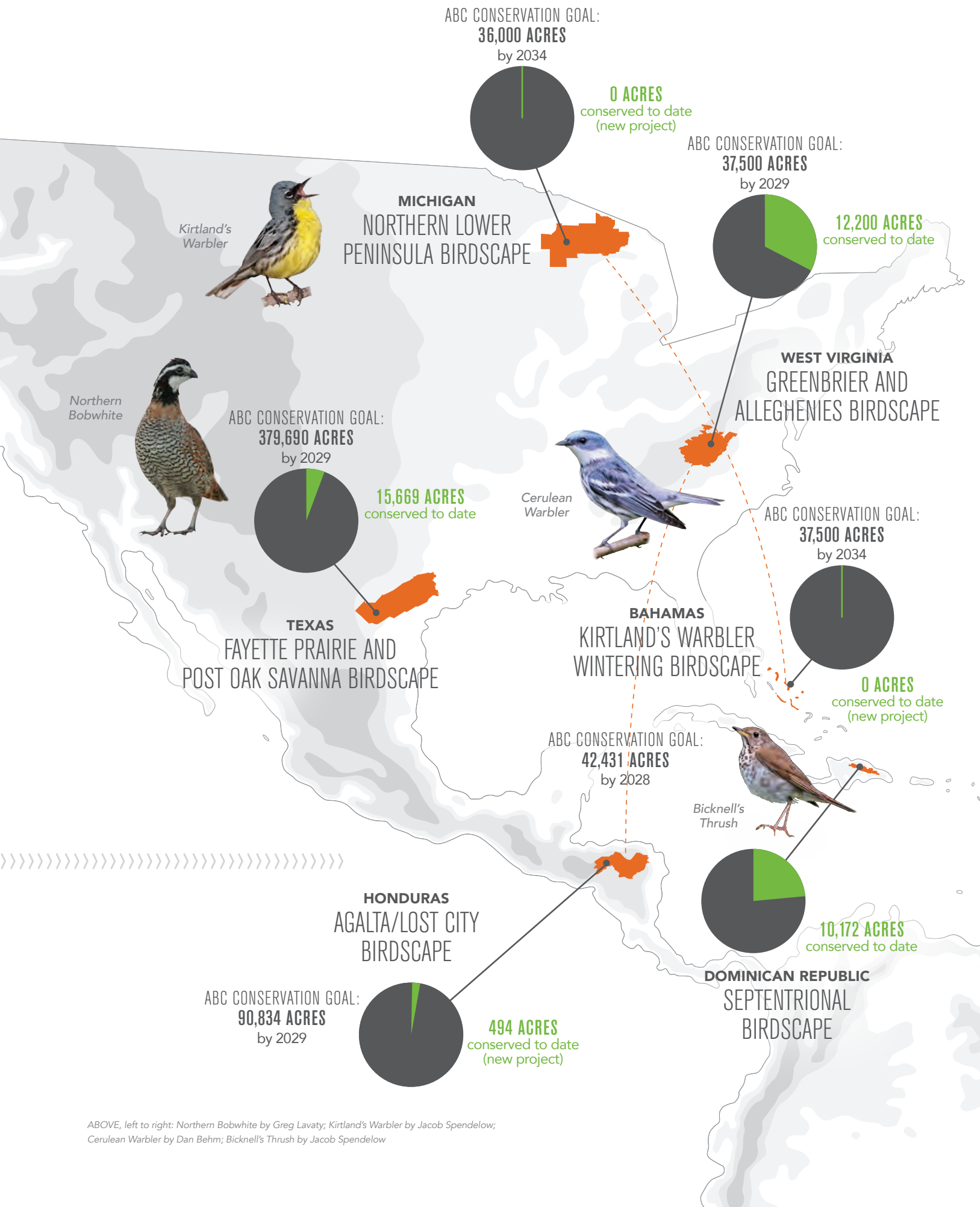
ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

BIRDSCAPE CONSERVATION

SEE MAP ON NEXT PAGE FOR PROGRESS MADE BY ABC & OUR PARTNERS

Working in partnership is the bedrock of ABC's organizational philosophy, and ABC is one of multiple partners engaged in almost all of these activities. To learn more, visit abcbirds.org/scorecard.





ABOVE, left to right: Northern Bobwhite by Greg Lavaty; Kirtland's Warbler by Jacob Spendelow; Cerulean Warbler by Dan Behm; Bicknell's Thrush by Jacob Spendelow



STATUS OF BIRDS

Estimates indicate that the following threats each kill more than **500,000 birds per year** in the U.S., and are not adequately mitigated or compensated:



Feral and owned cat predation:
2.4 Billion



Pesticide and other toxics poisoning:
72 Million



Collisions with communication towers:
6.8 Million



Collisions with home and other building windows:
600 Million



Collisions with, and electrocution by power lines:
36.5 Million



Entrapment in mining claim marker tubes and oil and wastewater pits:
1 Million



Collisions with vehicles:
200 Million



Lead poisoning:
12 Million



Collisions with wind turbines:
500 Thousand



AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY RESPONSE

CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

ABC has helped to **slow the rate of spread of feral cat colonies**, and has reached millions of Americans with the message that cats need to be kept indoors or contained outdoors to protect birds.

The **reduction of bird collisions** with window glass is a long-term effort, but the first critical steps to engage architects, glass manufacturers, and the public are well underway.

Bird mortality caused by lighted communication towers was almost certainly reduced significantly because of an ABC lawsuit and outreach that led to large numbers of towers changing to strobe lights that are 70% less likely to lure birds to their deaths.

Bird mortality caused by pesticides was likely reduced after ABC advocated for the cancellation or restriction of 14 harmful organophosphate and carbamate pesticides. Recently, this progress has probably been somewhat offset by the advent and spread of neonicotinoid pesticides, however.

Wind turbine-related bird mortality is increasing due to the expansion of wind power development. Despite this, ABC has encouraged the adoption of mitigation strategies and has helped to halt or mitigate at least 11 major wind development projects.



ABC filed and won a lawsuit to better protect Golden Eagles from wind turbine strikes.

ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

ABC launched a successful emergency campaign to protect Swainson's Hawks from monocrotophos poisoning in Argentina.

Thanks to outreach by ABC and partners, over 2,700 (or 17%) of tall U.S. communication towers have changed their lighting, saving birds.

ABC and New York Parks Department reached a settlement in late 2018 to protect the Piping Plovers that nest at Jones Beach State Park by relocating feral cats to a sanctuary.

ABC has certified **19 glass and window mitigation products** as bird-friendly, contributed to the establishment of a LEED credit for bird-friendly building design, and has trained more than 1,500 architects in bird-friendly design.

ABC advocated for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act and for its funding by Congress, resulting in **\$69.9 million in grants to bird conservation projects since 2002** and benefiting 4.75 million acres of bird habitat.



= All Bird Species

ABOVE: Golden Eagle by Jesus Giraldo Gutierrez, Shutterstock



AMERICAN BIRD
CONSERVANCY

Strategic Bird Conservation Framework

With Pacific Rim Conservation, Kauai Endangered Seabird Recovery Project, and FWS, ABC has helped to translocate 90 Hawaiian Petrels to a protected site inside a predator-proof fence on Kauai.



ENDANGERED BIRDS



Protected Area Creation and Sustainability to Save Species

ABC works to prevent the extinction of the most endangered birds by helping partner groups to establish and sustain protected reserves for the rarest species in Latin America; by supporting the restoration of habitat for endemic Hawaiian forest birds; and by protecting key seabird colonies from invasive species and other threats. ABC also monitors implementation of the U.S. Endangered Species Act to ensure all listed birds, and those that need to be listed, are properly conserved.

LEFT: Hawaiian Petrel by Cameron Rutt
BELOW: Cerulean Warbler by Agnieszka Bacal

ABC works to prevent birds of conservation concern from becoming endangered by engaging landowners and partner groups to help improve the management of millions of acres of land in the U.S. and internationally. ABC identifies areas (BirdScapes) where conservation opportunities overlap with key habitat for birds, and develops and implements management practices coupled with incentives to ensure that bird habitat is well protected, managed, or conserved.

BIRDS OF CONSERVATION CONCERN



Delivering Habitat Management and Landowner Incentives Across the Continent



Over the past four years, ABC has worked with private forest owners, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other partners across the Central Appalachians to create more than 9,000 acres of Cerulean Warbler habitat.

ABC works to prevent or mitigate threats to birds by working with policymakers, partner groups, and the private sector to develop and implement solutions to large-scale causes of bird mortality, along with precedent-setting or critical regional bird problems. This work involves lobbying, grassroots outreach, the development of new technologies, and occasional legal action to resolve particularly intractable problems.

THREATS TO ALL BIRDS



Working to Find Solutions with Policymakers and the Private Sector

ABC supports partners in their work to build the capacity to sustainably tackle the critical issues faced by birds across the Western Hemisphere. This includes financial and technical support, as well as knowledge sharing and technology development and implementation across a broad range of management and conservation programs.

BUILDING CONSERVATION CAPACITY

Fueling the Engine that Drives Bird Conservation



American Bird Conservancy

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To see the complete scorecard and links to data cited,

visit abcbirds.org/scorecard

Paper Source:

