



ANNUAL REPORT

2017



American Bird Conservancy is dedicated to conserving birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. With an emphasis on achieving results and working in partnership, we take on the greatest problems facing birds today, innovating and building on rapid advancements in science to halt extinctions, protect habitats, eliminate threats, and build capacity for bird conservation.

abcbirds.org

MESSAGE from the PRESIDENT



Dear Partners and Supporters:

Welcome to ABC's Annual Report! I'm pleased to showcase, for the first time, a cumulative "ABC Conservation Impact Scorecard." Going beyond our usual metrics for acres conserved and other readily trackable statistics, the scorecard includes a look at ABC's overall contribution to bird conservation against our goals — as well as a summary of the broader trends in bird populations and conservation. We feel that our results-focused approach requires that we begin reporting in this more comprehensively quantifiable format. I hope you will find the scorecard useful.

Producing such a scorecard presents some significant challenges. One is that we cannot provide comprehensive details, or the document will become unwieldy. For the same reason, we cannot practically list all partners alongside each achievement. The online version of the scorecard, available at abcbirds.org/scorecard2017, provides acknowledgment to more partners, greater project detail, citations and sources for data and scientific references, and links to more stories about specific conservation successes involving ABC.

As you would expect, the scorecard contains both good and bad news. We still see significant declines among migratory birds. Threats are serious, and some of them are growing. A number of species face a clear and present extinction risk. But there is a lot of good news, too. Some birds are rebounding, and certain threats are being effectively reduced or eliminated.

We at ABC are proud to have assisted in the prevention of four bird species extinctions; protection for 82 additional Endangered and Critically Endangered birds; improved management for priority species across 6.4 million acres; and habitat enhancement through the planting of 5.6 million trees and shrubs.

Perhaps the most important of all results, though, is that ABC and the rest of the bird community are drawing a line — through our voices, letters, partnerships, and even legal actions when necessary — to prevent the erosion of the conservation principles we stand for. Some things like this will never be measurable in numbers; it is what is in our hearts that counts here. Still, we will measure what we can, and leave the rest to our passion, dedication, courage, and determination.

All of us at ABC are committed to delivering on our mission with integrity and authenticity, to working efficiently with our collaborators, and to making sure we get the results you expect of us.

Thank you for being part of the ABC family. We will never lose sight of the fact that we cannot do this work for birds without you. The results we report on here belong to you just as much as they do to us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MJ Parr", written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael J. Parr
President

Halting Extinctions of ENDANGERED BIRDS

The rarest birds require focused and immediate action, and that's what ABC and partners continued to provide in 2017. In addition to protecting vital land in reserves, we completed habitat-improvement projects across seven countries, totaling more than 150,000 trees and benefiting rare birds from Hawai'i's **Palila** to Brazil's **Banded Cotinga**.

- ◆ Every individual counts for Hawai'i's native forest birds such as 'Akikiki and Puaiohi, which number fewer than 500 per species. Invasive rats, which eat eggs and young birds, are a key driver of population declines, but 2017 marked a heartening milestone on Kauai's Alaka'i Plateau: More than 100 native bird nests were protected from rat predation, and no monitored forest bird nests were lost to the rodents. The trapping effort, supported by ABC and carried out by the Kauai Forest Bird Recovery Project, has decreased the rat density by approximately 60 percent.
- ◆ Even small patches of habitat can represent a lifeline for the most endangered birds. That's the case with the **El Oro Parakeet**, which numbers fewer than 1,000 and is found only on the western slope of the Andes in southwest Ecuador. In 2017, ABC partnered with Fundación Jocotoco and others to secure 99 additional protected acres for the parakeet, increasing the existing Buenaventura Reserve to nearly 4,200 acres. The reserve is the species' sole protected area; it also provides wintering habitat for migratory birds such as **Blackburnian Warbler**.
- ◆ Three new nesting areas of the rare **Blue-throated Macaw** were discovered in 2017 by ABC-supported Bolivian partner, Asociación Armonía. Equipped with this information, ABC and others are positioned to better conserve the species, which numbers about 400 in the wild. This Critically Endangered bird — an ABC priority since 2008 — benefited most recently from creation of a 1,680-acre reserve that protects the largest known group of nesting Blue-throated Macaws. The reserve has been named for dedicated conservationist Laney Rickman, who passed away in 2017. Her legacy lives on through the Laney Rickman Blue-throated Macaw Reserve.
- ◆ Plagued by invasive species such as rats and feral cats at their nest burrows, imperiled Hawaiian seabirds continue to top our list of concerns. ABC and our partners made strides in 2017 toward establishing a new colony on Kauai for two of the rarest — **Hawaiian Petrel** and **Newell's Shearwater** — with 20 petrels and 18 shearwaters fledging from the restored, predator-free fenced area at Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge. A total of 75 birds have fledged from the site and are expected to return to breed in this safe haven, helping to boost the overall population over time.



LEFT: Puaiohi by Robby Kohley
OPPOSITE TOP: Blue-throated Macaws by Mark R Layman, Shutterstock
OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Brad Keitt holding a Newell's Shearwater. Photo by Nick Holmes



STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Brad Keitt, Oceans and Islands Program Director

After graduating from University of California, Santa Cruz, Brad was part of the scientific team that discovered and described the first nest of a Hawaiian honeycreeper called the 'Ākohekohe. With almost 30 years of field experience on approximately 100 islands — some his home for extended periods — Brad is about as amphibious as a human can be.

"I have been a water person for all of my life," he explains, "and my skills as a kayaker, surfer, and sailor have been really useful when working on islands and at sea. Whether it be driving a boat to follow birds at night so we can capture and study them, or landing on remote islands in rough seas, a deep knowledge of the ocean is a plus." Brad and his colleagues dedicate themselves to raising awareness of and saving some of the world's most beleaguered birds, including endangered Hawaiian honeycreepers and seabirds.



BIRDS OF CONCERN

Our BirdScapes approach brings a big vision to a big problem: reversing the decline of migratory birds, which totals approximately 2 billion breeding birds lost from North America since 1970. We've identified 52 BirdScapes where opportunity meets conservation needs for priority species such as **Wood Thrush** and **Long-billed Curlew**. In many of these vital places, we're working to improve management of millions of acres in breeding, wintering, and stopover areas.

- ◆ The steadily declining **Bicknell's Thrush** has among the smallest breeding and wintering ranges of any North American migratory bird. In 2017, ABC helped partner Fundación Loma Quita Espuela acquire three properties on the thrush's wintering grounds in the Dominican Republic, in the heart of the Septentrional BirdScape. Ownership of the 677 acres was transferred to the Ministry of the Environment; the land will be restored and protected for the benefit of Bicknell's Thrushes and resident birds such as the **Hispaniolan Woodpecker**.
- ◆ ABC's efforts to enhance breeding habitat for **Golden-winged Warbler** and **American Woodcock** crossed the 7,000-acre mark in 2017, helping to meet the needs of these increasingly uncommon species. Since 2013, this work has been conducted across several BirdScapes in the Great Lakes region, with the support of the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund, the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and many other partners.
- ◆ The **Flammulated Owl** is the focus of ABC's 2017 work with the Deschutes Land Trust (DLT), through which DLT

will acquire a conservation easement on 1,916 acres of dry ponderosa pine forest in eastern Oregon. A forest stewardship plan and restoration efforts will provide habitat for the species, which is threatened by loss of nesting cavities. Also in the western U.S., ABC petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to list **Oregon Vesper Sparrow** under the Endangered Species Act and initiated research to better understand factors affecting the species' population. FWS has agreed that the sparrow may be warranted for listing; a 12-month review is now underway.

- ◆ The end of 2017 marked the halfway point for implementation of the ABC-supported Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture's forest enhancement program for **Cerulean Warbler**, which has declined in population by about 70 percent over the past 40 years. Across several BirdScapes located in the core of the species' breeding range (West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland), 4,836 acres of privately owned forest lands have been enrolled in the program, resulting in \$2.4 million for forest management from the RCPP.



LEFT: Flammulated Owl by Jacob Spindel
OPPOSITE TOP: Bicknell's Thrush by Jeff Nadler
OPPOSITE BOTTOM: PeterDieser by Kevin Sheppard



STAFF HIGHLIGHT

PeterDieser, Golden-winged Warbler Public Lands Coordinator

PeterDieser's "office" is the Great Outdoors, and it teems with ticks, poison ivy, and mosquitoes in summer and sits beneath a frigid, snowy blanket in winter. As ABC's Golden-winged Warbler Public Lands Coordinator, Peter works tirelessly with public land managers to create ideal early successional habitat for one of the fastest-declining warblers — nearly 4,500 acres, and counting, since 2013. Half of the world's Golden-winged Warblers breed in Minnesota, and most winter in Central America.

"Though sometimes I wish I could join the warblers as they winter in the tropics," Peter says, "the winter months are when the ground is frozen — the time to roll up my sleeves and put my nose to the grindstone to complete habitat restoration and enhancement projects for this imperiled species."

Peter has a Master of Science in Natural Resources Science and Management from the University of Minnesota. He came to ABC from the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, where he worked as a naturalist.

Reducing Threats to

ALL BIRDS

As the human population grows and developments sprawl, an ever-changing obstacle course of threats expands for birds: wind turbines sited in migratory corridors, reflective glass on office buildings and homes, and free-roaming domestic cats, to name a few. While some impacts are inevitable, many of the billions of resulting bird deaths can be avoided. ABC works with policymakers, partner groups, and the private sector to minimize the toll.

- ◆ In 2017, responding to a lawsuit filed by ABC and Black Swamp Bird Observatory, the Ohio Air National Guard canceled its five-year effort to build a wind turbine at Camp Perry. Sited on public land on the shores of Lake Erie, the turbine presented a risk to the federally Endangered **Kirtland's Warbler**, along with the area's large **Bald Eagle** population and the world's largest confluence of migrating birds. More important than this single turbine, however, the decision could have opened the door to wind energy facilities on government-owned land in other key areas for birds.
- ◆ As many as 7 million birds die each year in collisions with communication towers and the guy wires that support them, including many nocturnal migrants such as **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** and **Swainson's Warbler**. Catalyzed by earlier ABC action, tower owners are reducing this threat by switching from steady-burning red or white lights, which attract and disorient birds, to less-harmful flashing lights. Since May 2017, more than 1,200 towers have replaced their lights, while ABC partner Stan Weigman launched www.songbirdsaver.org, a tool that enables concerned citizens to report towers that have yet to make the switch.
- ◆ Following advocacy by ABC and National Audubon Society, the Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act was introduced in the House of Representatives in 2017 and later in the Senate, marking the first time this important legislation has been introduced in both houses of Congress. The bill, which mandates the use of bird-friendly features to reduce collisions with new and existing federal buildings, has been included in a larger House bill. This progress is the result of bipartisan support in the House, and ABC advocacy efforts, and we are optimistic that the bill will move forward toward passage in the coming year.
- ◆ In 2017, ABC's lawsuit proceeded against the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation over feral cat colonies at Jones Beach, N.Y. The colonies were maintained in the vicinity of nesting **Piping Plovers**, a species listed under the Endangered Species Act. The case led to a victory for the birds in 2018, and humane removal of the cats to a sanctuary is now underway.



LEFT: Kirtland's Warbler by Peter Tamas
OPPOSITE TOP: Bald Eagle and wind turbines by Louise Redcorn
OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Jennifer Cipolletti by Aditi Desai



STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Jennifer Cipolletti, Director of Conservation Advocacy & Director, Bird Conservation Alliance

Jennifer began her conservation career at a wildlife rehabilitation center with Lake Metroparks in Ohio. After receiving her Master of Public Administration from Cleveland State University, she worked in conservation policy for Ducks Unlimited in North Dakota. Seeing firsthand how two different conservation organizations work to garner support served her well as she transitioned from working at the state level, often on hunting-related topics, to Washington, D.C.'s frequently fractious federal arena.

In her current role, she advocates for the best possible bird conservation legislation, making good use of a trait that she values and embodies: adaptability. "With decades' old laws being challenged and changed, we are having to be resilient," she says, "to find ways to make sure that conservation legislation is working for birds."



Building Capacity to

DRIVE BIRD CONSERVATION

ABC has always believed that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts: By providing expertise and resources to our partners across the Western Hemisphere, we achieve more conservation for birds. In 2017, the outcomes of this support ranged from installment of a Brazilian hummingbird garden to attract visitors and boost support for conservation, to advising ranchers on how to manage habitat for both birds and herds in the Great Plains.

- ◆ Our partners in Latin America and the Caribbean are on the conservation frontlines for rare birds like Brazil's **Araripe Manakin** and Bolivia's **Blue-throated Macaw**. To strengthen partner efforts, ABC granted \$282,250 to 11 partners in 2017 through the Latin American Reserve Stewardship Initiative (LARS), which was established in 2015 with March Conservation Fund. Matched with funds from the Jeniam Foundation, these 2017 grants supported equipment purchases, eight staff positions, fundraising initiatives, and development of projects that generated more than \$1.5 million in funds for our partners.
- ◆ At Serra do Urubu in northeastern Brazil, the LARS project enabled SAVE Brasil to create a hummingbird garden now visited by more than 20 hummingbird species, including the Endangered **Long-tailed Woodnymph**. Other birds, such as the Vulnerable **Seven-colored Tanager**, also make an appearance. Local and international birdwatchers are flocking to see the garden's avian visitors — and learning about conservation needs while there.
- ◆ Beach-nesting birds along the Gulf Coast, such as **Least Tern** and **Snowy Plover**, benefited from ABC-supported monitoring and stewardship efforts across almost 5,000 acres of coastline at 25 sites. Through education and outreach activities, we delivered our conservation message directly to more than 4,000 people and through social media to more than 1 million.
- ◆ Across several states in the Northern Great Plains, 22 landowners in 14 counties have implemented conservation practices on 36,790 acres, helping to reverse declines of grassland birds like **Lark Bunting** and **Chestnut-collared Longspur**. The work is being conducted through the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Conservation Districts, the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture, ABC, and many other partners.



LEFT: Seven-colored Tanager by Ciro Albano
OPPOSITE TOP: Least Tern and chicks by Ray Hennessy, Shutterstock
OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Wendy Willis (right) and Susan Otuokon, Executive Director of the Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (left). Photo by Junior Carson



STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Wendy Willis, Deputy Director of International Programs

Part of Wendy's childhood was spent on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, where she first learned the need for effective conservation when she witnessed the destruction of tropical forests for agriculture and other human uses. Wendy has worked as a biologist, bird bander, and point-counter in many parts of Latin America. For her Master's thesis at Humboldt State University, she studied the political ecology of shade-grown coffee in Jamaica.

Still traveling widely, now to work with ABC partners to safeguard birds, she heads up the Latin American Reserve Stewardship Initiative (LARS), through which ABC partners with March Conservation Fund to strengthen Latin American and Caribbean bird conservation organizations. "I have a love for the environment and also of people," Wendy says, "and I'm passionate about what the landscape means both to humans and to birds." She has a particular fondness for the Red-fronted Macaw, a species unique to Bolivia.

AT A GLANCE



The Turquoise-browed Motmot is found in nine ABC-supported bird reserves in Mexico and Central America. Photo by Owen Deutsch

ABC has supported the acquisition/ protection of more than **1 million acres** of land at 92 sites in 14 countries, with 32 partners.

Together, these sites provide habitat for **2,900 bird species**, including dozens of the most endangered.



2017

Falcon Club and Project Supporters

We are honored to acknowledge the individuals, foundations, businesses, and others who have supported ABC’s work. While space constraints prevent us from listing all of our donors, we are sincerely grateful for each member and every gift. We would also like to thank those who gave anonymously through the United Way or Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #12048).

The Falcon Club is our pivotal group of members who donate unrestricted gifts of \$1,000 or more each year. Members of this group (denoted in purple) collectively form a cornerstone in the success of all of our bird conservation programs and projects.

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TOP: Peregrine Falcon by Alexander Erdbeer, Shutterstock;
RIGHT: Sandhill Cranes by Rosalie Kreulen, Shutterstock

Crested Owls by Owen Deutsch



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Long-billed Curlew by Tim Zurowski, Shutterstock

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TOP: Cerulean Warbler by Ryan Sanderson
LEFT: Sanderlings by Owen Deutsch

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American Woodcock by John Turner

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Long-wattled Umbrellabird
by Owen Deutsch

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Golden-winged Warbler © Michael Stubblefield



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Eastern Kingbird © Michael Stubblefield

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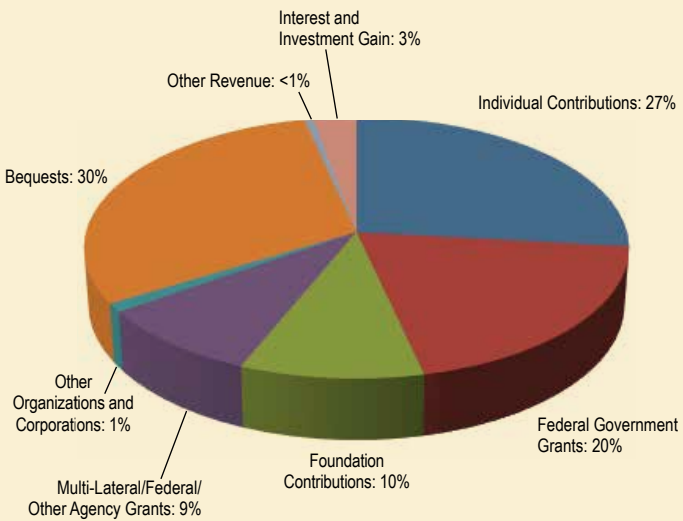
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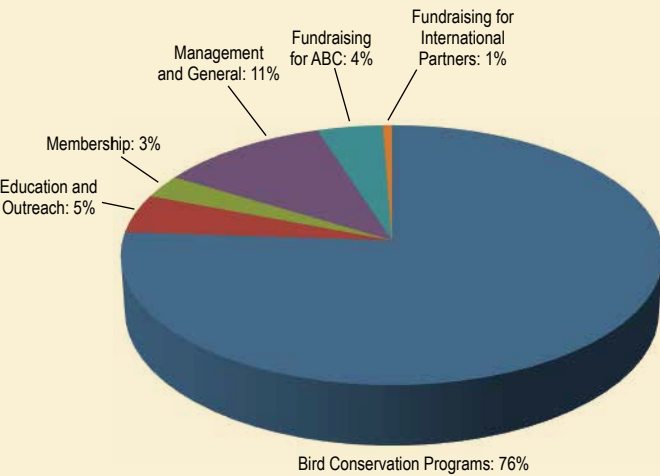
ANNUAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Bequests	\$ 5,359,528
Individual Contributions	\$ 4,739,031
Federal Government Grants	\$ 3,485,518
Foundation Contributions	\$ 1,723,502
Multi-Lateral/Federal/Other Agency Grants	\$ 1,595,082
Interest and Investment Gain	\$ 504,933
Other Organizations and Corporations	\$ 187,494
Other Revenue	\$ 110,300
Total Annual Support and Revenue	17,705,389



ANNUAL EXPENSES

Program	
Bird Conservation Programs	\$ 9,758,402
Education and Outreach	\$ 621,147
Membership	\$ 363,387
Total Program Services	\$10,742,936
Supporting Services	
Management and General	\$ 1,455,165
Fundraising for ABC	\$ 558,498
Fundraising for International Partners	\$ 78,597
Total Supporting Services	\$2,092,260
Total Annual Expenses	\$12,835,195
Net Assets at December 31, 2017	\$10,777,880



American Bird Conservancy’s financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2017 were audited by the certified public accounting firm of Gelman, Rosenberg, and Freedman. A copy of ABC’s complete financial statements can be obtained by contacting: American Bird Conservancy, P.O. Box 249, The Plains, VA 20198 or on our website at abcbirds.org.



Prairie Warbler © Michael Stubblefield

American Bird Conservancy

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Hawaiian Petrel in nest burrow by Andre Raine

