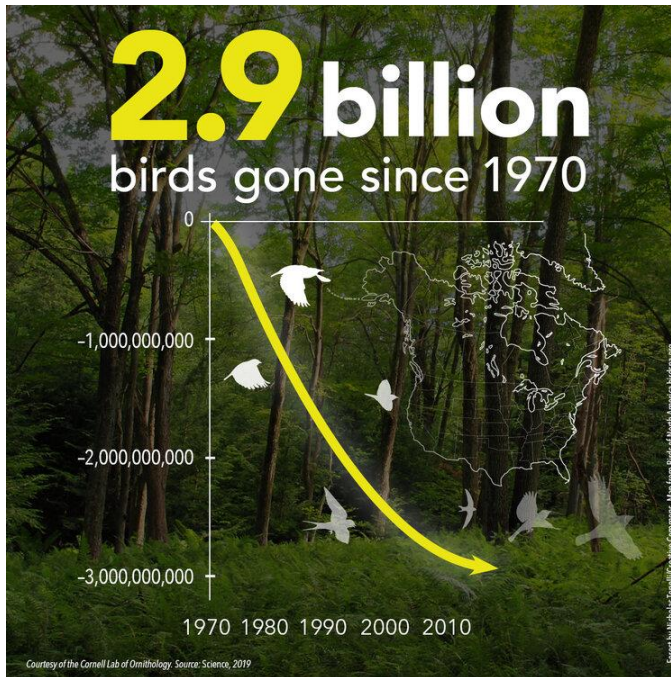




Bringing back the birds

Bird Conservation Opportunities



Migratory Birds: To reverse ongoing migratory bird declines, please support this package of programs and policies to:

1. Establish new funding mechanisms including a Songbird Stamp, and a revised 1:1 match formula for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act.
2. Fully fund the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures currently estimated at \$25 million. Bring all the JVs up to minimum functional level.
3. Fully fund the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act at \$6.5 million.
4. Withdraw the final Migratory Bird Treaty Act regulation.
5. Issue a Migratory Bird Treaty Act incidental take permitting regulation and endorse the Migratory Bird Protection Act.

Endangered Species: Recently finalized rulemakings have created new barriers to listing, eroded take protections for threatened species, and weakened habitat protections formerly provided by critical habitat and inter-agency consultation. To prevent extinctions and bolster recovery efforts please support this package of programs and policies to:

1. Increase State of the Birds Activities funding for recovery programs in Hawaii to \$10 million annually.
2. Oppose the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing exemption of the Greater Sage-Grouse.
3. Require science-based listing decisions for Greater Sage-Grouse, including the Bi-State and Washington State populations, and California Spotted Owl.
4. Issue a critical habitat designation for the *rufa* subspecies of the Red Knot.
5. Reverse the three ESA-related rulemakings that created new barriers to listing, reduced take protection for threatened species, and provided for less habitat protection for listed species.

Invasive Species: Invasive species are among the top drivers of biodiversity loss globally and have been identified by scientists as a major contributor to bird extinctions. For example, invasive mosquitos have brought diseases that are decimating bird populations in Hawaii. To better protect birds from invasives:

1. Exercise available regulatory authorities and support new authorities to better protect against new invaders via global trade and interstate transport.
2. Provide \$10 million per year in increased funding to eradicate invasive species and prevent further outbreaks.
3. Provide \$35 million over five years to eradicate non-native, disease-carrying mosquitos from Hawaii.
4. Develop a unified list of established invasive species needing control, including feral domestic animals such as cats and pigs.

Seabirds: Seabirds are among the most imperiled groups of birds. About one-third of seabird species are in decline worldwide due to sea-level rise, ingestion of plastics, reduction of prey due to overfishing, and fisheries bycatch. Most seabirds nest on the ground or in burrows, where they are especially vulnerable to non-native predators, including feral cats, mongooses, rats, and mice. To better protect seabirds:

1. Develop an implementation plan for the U.S. National Plan of Action-Seabirds through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration seabird program.
2. Create a multi-agency task force to address the issue of cumulative fisheries seabird bycatch across national fisheries.
3. Implement best management practices to mitigate seabird bycatch and plastic pollution.
4. Provide science support for assessing and mitigating bycatch in certified fisheries to help sustainable fishers to become more bird-friendly.
5. Accede to the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, and support the Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act to implement the agreement.

Pesticides: Pesticides are estimated to kill as many as 72 million birds each year according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A growing body of research indicates that a group of the most common pesticides, neonicotinoids, are causing severe environmental harm, including insect declines and water pollution. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has failed to remove from the market a pesticide, chlorpyrifos, known to harm human health. To protect the public and wildlife from pesticides:

1. Require the EPA to ban chlorpyrifos.
2. Require EPA to institute a moratorium on new neonicotinoid registrations.
3. Require EPA to initiate a rule-making to restrict pre-emptive use of all currently registered neonicotinoid products, while conducting a scientific review of their impacts on birds, insects, and the overall environment.
4. Require the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ban the use of neonicotinoids on National Wildlife Refuges.

Window Collisions: As many 1 billion birds a year die from collisions with windows in the U.S. alone. Reducing this mortality is one of the most important things we can do to bring back bird populations. To reduce this mortality:

1. Adopt Bird Safe Building guidelines for all federal buildings, as outlined in the Bird-Safe Buildings Act.
2. Propose national legislation to apply to all buildings nationwide similar to the recently passed New York City legislation.

3. Provide \$100 million in annual funding to develop bird-safe glass products that also generate electricity.



Bird Smart Wind and Renewable Energy: Wind energy development is having significant impacts on birds and habitats through collisions with turbines and habitat loss. With the massive anticipated expansion of wind energy, these impacts will continue to grow unless effective policies are established. To conserve birds as renewable energy is developed:

1. Require that wildlife impacts be considered and avoided to the extent possible in wind energy facility development planning; this is best accomplished through site-specific analyses, complemented by regional or programmatic planning.
2. Require minimization and mandatory mitigation measures to ensure that wind energy development results in a net benefit to wildlife populations and diversity.
3. Require that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines be mandatory, and develop a system for verifying compliance.
4. Ensure that new energy grid infrastructure (e.g., transmission lines) are sited and constructed in a way that minimizes impacts to birds and their habitat.
5. Establish a fund to minimize and offset wildlife impacts of wind energy and other renewables.
6. Promote energy efficiency measures and distributed solar energy development, which have the least impacts to birds compared to other energy options that mitigate climate change. Also, promote programs to enable homeowners, businesses, and public facilities to install solar panels.

Tower Collisions: As many as 7 million birds every year die from collisions with tall towers. Significant progress has been made with new policies that allow for turning off steady-burning lights, which attract birds. To complete the lighting transition of tall towers over 350 feet and address mortality caused by towers shorter than 350 feet:

1. Issue a regulation to require tall tower operators to phase out use of steady-burning lights to reduce bird mortality and energy costs.
2. Establish a mitigation fund to change outdated lighting arrays on towers below 350 feet.

Public Lands: Institute new national land management and mitigation policies that promote wildlife conservation, habitat protection, and ecosystem restoration, including the following:

1. Revise the 2016 BLM Western Oregon Plan Revisions to restore wildlife, and riparian, and other protections lost from 1995 plans, and update strengthen the Northwest Forest Plan to recover the threatened Marbled Murrelet and Northern Spotted Owl

2. Revoke the Presidential Memorandum, "Proposed Revised Habitat for the Spotted Owl: Minimizing Regulatory Burdens," as a step to recover the threatened Marbled Murrelet and Northern Spotted Owl.
3. Restore the Presidential Memorandum, "Mitigating Impacts on Natural Resources from Development and Encouraging Related Private Investment," and complete development of agency mitigation policies.
4. Update the Greater Sage-Grouse conservation plans based on the best available science, as well as the Presidential Mitigation Memorandum referenced above.



Reforestation and Forest Carbon: High-carbon, old-growth forests on public lands in the Pacific Northwest and Northern California are critical habitat for the Marbled Murrelet and Northern Spotted Owl. More broadly, conserving forest carbon, and keeping forests as forests to continue providing sequestration, have dual benefits of providing bird habitat and helping to mitigate climate change. In addition, there are areas where tree planting could be incentivized. To sequester additional carbon and create new wildlife habitat:

1. Protect existing carbon stores in mature and old-growth forests within the range of the Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet.
2. Support establishing a federal program to provide carbon payments and other incentives to forest landowners to keep their forest as forest.
3. Fund native tree planting for reforestation in appropriate areas to sequester carbon and increase habitat for native birds in decline.

Grasslands: Grasslands represent some of the most converted landscapes; 98% of the tallgrass, 76% of the mixed-grass, and 46% of the shortgrass prairies have been converted to cropland and other land uses, resulting in 720 million grassland birds lost since 1970; one-quarter of the 3 billion birds lost were grassland birds. To reverse these declines:

1. Support establishing a grasslands program similar to the North American Wetlands Conservation Act that can take advantage of successful bird habitat Joint Venture partnership efforts to conserve declining grassland bird species.
2. Require USDA programs to use native warm-season grasses in all grassland restoration efforts and build a market for native seeds.
3. Support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act to build private lands programs in states through State Wildlife Agencies and conservation organizations.

Lead Ammunition and Fishing Tackle: As many as 16 million birds die each year from ingesting lead, with significant impacts to Bald and Golden Eagles. Worst of all, recovery of the endangered California Condor is currently being limited by ongoing lead poisonings. To address this threat:

1. Move to phase out toxic ammunition and fishing tackle within a reasonable time period.
2. Provide interim protection from lead for National Wildlife Refuges and important bird areas.
3. Provide funds for hunter education, outreach, and acquisition of nontoxic products to facilitate a smooth transition away from lead.

For more information please contact Steve Holmer, Vice President of Policy, American Bird Conservancy, sholmer@abcbirds.org.