

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

# CONSERVATION

## IMPACT SCORECARD 2021



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). Nevertheless, this document does provide data on those ABC program outcomes that are most easily quantified.

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 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 26 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 (or Impact) Report, which can be found at: [abcbirds.org/results/annual-reports/](http://abcbirds.org/results/annual-reports/).

**A more extensive version of this scorecard is available on our website at [abcbirds.org/scorecard](http://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 15 bird extinctions in the Americas and U.S. Pacific Territories since 1968 (most in Hawai’i). Today, the majority of endangered birds outside the U.S. have at least some populations in protected areas, but significant gaps remain, and only 19% 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 widespread 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: Short-crested Coquette by Greg Homel,  
Natural Elements Productions.





## STATUS OF BIRDS

There have been 15 bird species extinctions in the Americas and U.S. Pacific Territories since 1968, and 5 more bird species have been declared extinct in the wild but still survive in captivity. BirdLife International scientists believe that an additional **17 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). Since then, four species have been delisted due to successful recovery efforts, including the Kirtland's Warbler and Black-capped Vireo.

**In the Americas and U.S. Pacific Territories, there are currently 263 Endangered (EN) and Critically Endangered (CR) bird species on the IUCN Red List.** Habitat loss is considered the principal threat for 189 of these. The remaining 74 species are primarily threatened by other factors, such as invasive species.



*In 2021, ABC helped to create a new reserve for the Critically Endangered Cherry-throated Tanager with partner SAVE Brasil.*



## AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY RESPONSE

### CONSERVATION OUTCOMES



Of the 189 EN and CR birds primarily threatened by habitat loss, ABC-supported projects (such as bird reserves) currently provide some **protected habitat for 82 species** (43%).

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 17 bird species extinctions considered to have been averted since 1994 in the Americas, ABC and partners have significantly contributed to preventing 5. While surviving, these species require ongoing conservation action:

- ALAGOAS ANTWREN
- JUNIN GREBE
- LEAR'S MACAW
- PALE-HEADED BRUSHFINCH
- YELLOW-EARED PARROT ►



### ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

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

After years maturing at sea, the first 'A'o (Newell's Shearwaters) and 'Ua'u (Hawaiian Petrels) returned to the Nihokū fenced area on Kaua'i, carefully prepared by a consortium of partners including ABC. The birds were translocated to the site as chicks; their return represents encouraging progress in our work to create a thriving, predator-free breeding area for rare seabirds.

Since our last (2019) scorecard, ABC has supported new and expanded reserves for some of the Americas' most endangered birds, including the Antioquia Brushfinch, Banded Ground-Cuckoo, Blue-throated Hillstar, Lilacine Amazon, Red-fronted Macaw, and Short-crested Coquette.

With partners, ABC has supported the acquisition/ protection of 1,192,401 acres of land at 103 sites in 15 countries, with 51 partners. We have also supported the planting of 6,813,945 trees and shrubs in reserves and buffer areas.



**1,192,401 - ACRES ACQUIRED/PROTECTED**  
**6,813,945 - TREES AND SHRUBS PLANTED**

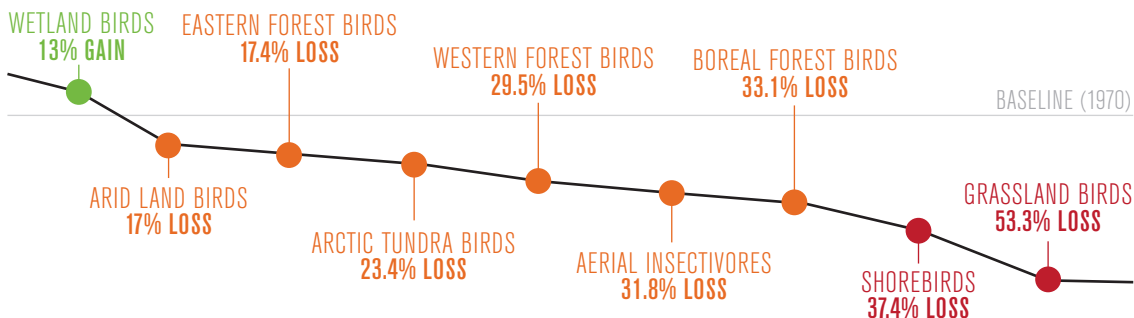
= Fewer Bird Species

TOP: Cherry-throated Tanager by Ciro Albano. Yellow-eared Parrots by Tom Friedel.



## STATUS OF BIRDS

Breeding Bird Survey and Christmas Bird Count data show that since 1970, there has been a loss of nearly **3 billion birds overall** from the U.S. and Canada. Further, the U.S. WatchList identifies 276 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 **98 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 42 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 2021 was 8.5 million acres. (Acreage data is calculated yearly. This scorecard reflects acreage data through 2021.)



**8.5 MILLION ACRES**

with improved conservation management

ABC also works with partners in many parts of Latin America and the Caribbean to ensure healthy wintering and stopover habitat for migratory birds. For example, in 2021, ABC and Guatemalan partner FUNDAECO harvested the first crops from our shade-grown cardamom investment project in the Conservation Coast BirdScape. The project replaced cattle pastures with a mix of cardamom and native trees. Revenue generated from the sale of cardamom will be reinvested into the restoration of more degraded lands.

### 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. In almost all of the activities outlined here, ABC is one of multiple partners. To learn more, visit [abcbirds.org/scorecard](https://abcbirds.org/scorecard).

= More Bird Species



## NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS BIRDSCAPE

ABC CONSERVATION GOAL:  
**2.75 MILLION ACRES**  
by 2031

**24,143 ACRES**  
conserved to date

Chestnut-collared  
Longspur

## MISSOURI CURRENT RIVER HILLS BIRDSCAPE

ABC CONSERVATION GOAL:  
**320,000 ACRES**  
by 2032

**221,707 ACRES**  
conserved to date

Cerulean  
Warbler

## VIRGINIA VIRGINIA BLUE RIDGE HIGHLANDS BIRDSCAPE

ABC CONSERVATION GOAL:  
**15,534 ACRES**  
by 2024

**9,066 ACRES**  
conserved to date

Eastern  
Whip-poor-will

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SIERRA DE BAHORUCO BIRDSCAPE

ABC CONSERVATION GOAL:  
**224,000 ACRES**  
by 2032

**178,433 ACRES**  
conserved to date

Bicknell's  
Thrush

## MEXICO EL TOKIO BIRDSCAPE

ABC CONSERVATION GOAL:  
**200,000 ACRES**  
by 2025

**111,500 ACRES**  
conserved to date

Mountain  
Plover

## COLOMBIA CENTRAL ANDES BIRDSCAPE

ABC CONSERVATION GOAL:  
**3,000 ACRES**  
by 2032

**726 ACRES**  
conserved to date

ABOVE: Chestnut-collared Longspur by Greg Lavaty; Eastern Whip-poor-will by Frode Jacobsen; Cerulean Warbler by Dan Behm; Mountain Plover by Agami Photo Agency, Shutterstock; Bicknell's Thrush by Jacob Spendelow





## STATUS OF BIRDS



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:  
**680 Thousand**

*Other significant sources of bird mortality include plastics ingestion and entanglement; collapse of important food sources, such as aquatic insects, due to pesticide pollution; and invasive species on islands, impacting seabirds and island endemics. ABC works to reduce all of the threats listed above across the Americas.*



## AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY RESPONSE

### CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

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.

ABC's advocacy and outreach played a key role in the cancellation or restriction of 15 harmful organophosphate and carbamate pesticides, **reducing bird mortality from toxic chemicals**. However, our fight must continue given the advent and spread of deadly neonicotinoids.

ABC supports renewable energy, except when projects pose unacceptable risks to birds, such as along important migratory corridors or near protected areas. Our advocacy has helped to halt or mitigate at least 16 major wind development projects in these places.

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.

Bird mortality caused by lighted communication towers was reduced by 70% thanks in part to an ABC lawsuit and outreach that led to over 2,700 towers (17%) turning off the steady-burning lights that lure birds to their deaths.



*ABC helped trap and remove 63 feral cats from two Hawaiian wildlife refuges, benefiting birds such as the Endangered Hawaiian Black-necked Stilt (Ae'o).*

### ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

ABC and partner advocacy led to changes that will reduce impacts on birds from New York's Heritage Wind project, sited adjacent to the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge (early 2022).

ABC staff played a key role in the passage of the **world's most far-reaching bird-friendly building design legislation**: New York City's Local Law 15, passed in 2020.

A multi-agency partnership involving ABC reached a milestone in 2021 when the state of Hawai'i approved permits for "Birds, Not Mosquitoes"—an all-out effort to reduce the primary threat to

Hawaiian forest birds: avian diseases carried by the non-native insects.

ABC has certified **125 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 3,000 architects in bird-friendly design. ABC also opened a second testing facility in 2021 due to rising demand for bird-friendly glass.

ABC rulemaking petitions and legal actions contributed to the restoration or expansion of bird protections under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.



= All Bird Species

ABOVE: Hawaiian Black-necked Stilt (Ae'o) by Jack Jeffery.



AMERICAN BIRD  
CONSERVANCY

## Strategic Bird Conservation Framework

ABC worked with partners to install artificial nest burrows for the Critically Endangered **Galapagos Petrel**. At least one chick has already been raised by petrels using an artificial burrow.



### 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: **Galapagos Petrel** by Dusan Brinkhuizen.  
BELOW: **Black Skimmer** by Greg Lavaty.



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 where conservation opportunities overlap with key habitat for birds, known as BirdScapes, 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*

The **Black Skimmer** is one of the birds benefiting from the ABC-led SPLASH (Stopping Plastics and Litter Along Shorelines) program, which has removed 12,230 pounds of trash and plastics from Texas coastlines since its inception in 2020.

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](http://abcbirds.org/scorecard)



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