



Incentives for Bird Conservation Solutions

American Bird Conservancy works to conserve birds and their habitats throughout the Americas and advocates for a variety of solutions, some of which would benefit and see better implementation if companies were financially rewarded for adopting them.

Fire Safe Homes and Communities

The devastating loss of thousands of homes and businesses in the Los Angeles fires is a powerful reminder that we need to require a much [higher level of fire safety](#) for urban and suburban structures. Senator Ron Wyden has drafted the Wildfire Safe Communities Act, and in the 118th Congress Rep. Jared Huffman introduced the [Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Act](#), H.R. 9760 to require new structures and community developments be built with fire safety in mind. Forest management is not a solution for the Los Angeles fires, or the fire that destroyed Lahaina, Hawaii in 2023.

Incentives for builders, and home and business owners are needed to ensure that all new buildings are built fire-safe, and to begin providing resources for needed retrofits of older homes that often have the highest fire risks.

Powerline Retrofits

Millions of birds, including hundreds of protected eagles die each year as a result of electrocutions and collisions with power lines. [The recently enacted Bald and Golden Eagle incidental-take general permit rule](#) for powerlines and wind projects requires retrofitting and upgrading infrastructure to reduce electrocutions, which also cause power outages and fires. These improvements will also benefit the expanded use of renewable electricity by increasing reliability and capacity to move energy across the grid.

Existing technology can be used to retrofit existing powerlines or added during line upgrades to reduce collisions. Rewarding companies that retrofit lines and poles, and that adopt collision reduction measures, would support the clean energy transition, reduce fire risks, and apply the available best practices that greatly reduce bird mortality.

Distributed Solar

Developing photovoltaic solar energy upon the already-developed landscape poses the least risks to bird populations and reduces pressures to develop important habitats elsewhere. We urge that this solution be bolstered and expanded through preserving the Inflation Reduction Act's clean energy tax credits and making distributed solar even more affordable for homeowners and businesses. Distributed energy sources also inherently increase reliability and stability of electrical grids and reduce the need for contentious and difficult-to-permit transmission lines.

Incentivizing homeowners, businesses, municipalities, and utilities to install solar on the developed landscape supports the clean energy transition and reduces impacts to birds and habitats.

Windows that Reduce Bird Collisions

An estimated one billion birds die in the US each year due to collisions with windows and a growing number of federal agencies and local municipalities now require the use of bird-friendly glass and design features to reduce collisions.

American Bird Conservancy operates two testing facilities that evaluate glass products based on their effectiveness at avoiding collisions. Many [certified bird friendly glass products](#) are now available. Rewarding glass companies to develop and produce new products, developers to utilize these materials for new buildings, and owners to retrofit existing structures that cause significant bird mortality would speed the adoption of this bird-friendly infrastructure solution and greatly reduce bird deaths from collisions.

Seabird Bycatch Reduction Gear

Seabirds are one of the most threatened groups of birds with many species in decline. Fisheries are a significant source of mortality where birds can be hooked or netted causing them to drown, while others are at risk from colliding with wires and other parts of the boats, causing injury and death. [Technologies exist](#) that greatly reduce birds being hooked, and use of scaring lines on the boat can prevent most collisions.

An incentive for fisheries to fully utilize the available low-risk gear and bycatch prevention measures would reduce this needless mortality, while improving efficiency of the fisheries themselves.

Non-toxic Ammunition

Lead poisoning from spent ammunition left in carcasses is one of the most serious threats to scavenging raptors in the United States. Lead poisoning from ingestion of contaminated meat is the number one cause of mortality for California Condors and is a significant roadblock on the path to population stability for [Bald and Golden Eagles](#). Though many safer alternatives to lead ammunition exist, some hunters find trouble sourcing these alternatives or find the minimal cost differences to be insurmountable.

Major barriers to adoption of non-toxic ammunition include: perceived lack of availability, slight difference in price from lead ammunition, and lack of education to sportspeople. Increasing the knowledge around the benefits of non-toxic ammunition paired with an incentive to adopt it would have major benefits to people and wildlife.

Making the purchase of non-lead ammunition tax deductible is a potential pathway to incentivizing its use. A specific tax break for non-lead users is also a viable option, as is either (A) directing existing excise taxes into a fund which would be accessible by state wildlife agencies to provide lead ammunition giveaways or (B) levying a new excise tax on non-lead ammunition used for hunting.

Non-neonicotinoid-coated Seeds

Nearly 100% of corn, 70% of soybeans, and 50% of wheat produced domestically is grown from seeds coated with a neonicotinoid insecticide. While there are some cases where the neonicotinoid coating may provide some benefit, Environmental Protection Agency and independent analyses have consistently shown there to be very little economic benefit in using these coatings. Research also shows an enormous environmental and human health risk in the form of wildlife ingesting the seeds, decreased invertebrate populations from pesticide runoff, and water contamination.

If provided a choice, [Many growers would choose to not use these coatings](#). A tax incentive for growers *not* using a neonicotinoid-coated seed would lower environmental toxin loads while decreasing the economic burden for farmers, providing more choice, and decreasing pest resistance to systemic insecticides.

Native Plant Materials

[Native plant materials](#) are vital when restoring natural habitats. All too often, introduced species or aggressive cultivars are used in restoration and management, which tend to dramatically reduce biodiversity. This often-subtle visual difference leads to real consequences in how ecosystems function. Water quality and quantity are affected. Plant community resilience is hampered, along with drought and wild fire tolerance. Pollinators, other insects, and birds are impacted.

A tax incentive could be applied when producers/landowners document the use of high diversity, native plant materials when they restore or reclaim tracts of land.

Grazing Rest

Supplying more residual vegetation in grazing lands at the right times is one of the keys to providing adequate habitat for declining grassland birds. [Grazing rest](#) provides the pathway for producers to deliver that. Doing so also can provide a host of other benefits to the producer and the American people.

A tax incentive for using an advanced, modern grazing system that leaves a healthier landscape would allow real value to remain with the producer when they provide a fair value to the public for needed ecosystem services.

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