

# Helping North America's Birds

## INTRODUCTION

Birds are all around us. In fact, they are probably the most commonly seen wild animals by humans. That makes bird life the perfect indicator of the quality of our environment. According to The State of The Birds, an annual report from a variety of educational and conservation institutions, wild birds of all kinds are in serious decline. Despite these losses, there are many opportunities to help the birds you enjoy by assisting with conservation efforts. Learn all about the birds of North America, the threats they face and what we can do to help!

## WHY BIRDS MATTER

Birds DISPERSE SEEDS

Birds are POLLINATORS

Birds EAT BUGS

Birds are SYMBOLS

Birds are THE VOICE OF NATURE

Birds HELP PEOPLE CONNECT WITH NATURE

Birds RECYCLE MATERIAL

Birds INSPIRE US



Humans TRACK BIRDS



Humans MONITOR BIRD ILLNESSES



Humans STUDY BIRD BIOLOGY



Humans FEED BIRDS



Humans PRESERVE BIRD ENVIRONMENTS



Humans ANALYZE BIRD BEHAVIORS



Humans SERVE AS SURROGATE PARENTS



Humans PROVIDE NESTING OPPORTUNITIES

## HOW HUMANS HELP BIRDS

## BIRDS IN TROUBLE

The State of The Birds report identified several species as those in the greatest jeopardy. At the same time, it also highlighted a few conservation success stories.

### OAK TITMOUSE

**HABITAT:** Western Forests

**20% Decline Since 1968**

**THREATS:** Urban development, suburban insect pests, non-native diseases, fire suppression efforts

### RUDDY TURNSTONE

**HABITAT:** Migratory Shore

**50% Decline Since 1974**

**THREATS:** Destruction of stopover habitats, species over-concentration in threatened geographic areas, loss of wetlands, overfishing.

### SNOWY PLOVER

**HABITAT:** Coastal

**28% Increase Since 1968**

**SUCCESS:** Creation of 160 coastal national wildlife refuges.

**THREATS:** Increased use of habitat for recreation, rising sea levels, wetland loss, oil spills and pollution

### CERULEAN WARBLER

**HABITAT:** Eastern Forests

**32% Decline Since 1968**

**THREATS:** Urban development, suburban insect pests, non-native diseases

### LE CONTE'S THRASHER

**HABITAT:** Aridlands

**46% Decline Since 1968**

**THREATS:** Residential and energy development, invasions of non-native grasses, tree and shrub encroachment

### EASTERN MEADOWLARK

**HABITAT:** Grasslands

**40% Decline Since 1968**

**THREATS:** Pasture land loss, suburban sprawl, conversion to large-scale agriculture, overgrazing

### 'AKIAPOLA'AU

**HABITAT:** Island

**Major Decline Since 1968**

**THREATS:** Habitat restriction, non-native predators, non-native plants, non-native diseases, lack of food, overgrazing

### PURPLE GALLINULE

**HABITAT:** Wetlands

**40% Increase Since 1968**

**SUCCESS:** Clean Water Act, Farm Bill conservation provisions, federally protected wetlands, local management areas.

**THREATS:** Loss of wetlands, pollution

### ALEUTIAN TERN

**HABITAT:** Ocean

**Major Decline Since 1968**

**THREATS:** Overfishing, offshore energy development, oil spills and pollution, plastic debris in ocean.

## BIRD THREATS

### ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

NATURAL DISEASES

HABITAT DIVISION BY ROADS

FILLING IN WETLANDS

HABITAT DIVISION BY DEVELOPMENT

FOREST CLEARING

CUTTING DOWN TREES

MOWING WILD FIELDS

DIVERTING WATER

DREDGING RIVERS

### ANIMALS

COMPETING INVASIVE SPECIES

Introduced Predator  
**FERRET**

Introduced Predator  
**SNAKE**

Introduced Predator  
**CAT**

Introduced Predator  
**RAT**

Introduced Predator  
**LIZARD**

### POLLUTION

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS

INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS

PLASTICS

OIL SPILLS

AUTOMOBILES

### PHYSICAL COLLISION THREATS

WINDOWS

WIND TURBINES

DAMMED RIVERS

POWER LINES

COMMUNICATION TOWERS

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

The State of The Birds report recommends a number of options to help birds nationally and in your area.

#### Support Bird-Friendly Legislation

Bird conservation societies often alert the public on legislation that can affect bird populations. In particular, watch for changes to the Farm Bill, the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act. Contact your legislators to tell them you support conservation efforts.

#### Engage in Citizen Science

Participate in events, studies and surveys that help further the science of ornithology. These efforts include the Christmas Bird Count, maintaining eBird sighting logs, the North American Breeding Bird survey, Project FeederWatch and many more.

#### Support Habitat Protection Efforts

Monitor local planning commissions and zoning boards for efforts to develop habitats used by birds and other wildlife. Alert conservation societies on these proposals and fight to keep the habitats undisturbed.

#### Know the Endangered Species in Your Area

Learn what bird and wildlife species are already considered endangered in your area and engage in efforts to assist them.

#### Create Bird-Friendly Environments

Build or rebuild habitats that birds can use. This can be on a small scale in your own yard, at a medium scale in a municipal park or on a large scale at a waterway or a major tract of land.

