



*Bringing back the birds*

*Inside Bird Conservation June 2023*

## **[Endangered Species Act Celebrates 50 Years of Conservation Success](#)**

The third Friday in May marked the annual celebration of National Endangered Species Day. This year is extra special as the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) is celebrating 50 years of protecting and recovering Endangered and Threatened species and their habitats. In celebration of this milestone, the American Bird Conservancy Action Fund, the 501(c)(4) affiliate ... [Read More>>](#)

## **[Recent Condor Deaths from Avian Flu Are a Reminder of the Species' Precarity](#)**

This year, 2023, marks the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. Amidst the lists of accomplishments and celebrations, all of which are warranted, is a news story that stands in stark contrast: Nearly one-tenth of the wild population of federally Endangered California Condors died in April. On April 17, 2023, Idaho-based conservation group The ... [Read More>>](#)

## **[Senate Approves Resolution to Delist Lesser Prairie Chicken](#)**

On Wednesday, May 3, the Senate approved a resolution that would delist the declining [Lesser Prairie Chicken](#). Chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV), broke party lines, joining Republican colleagues to vote [50-48](#) in favor of the measure. Democrat Senators Jeanne Shaheen (NH) and Diane Feinstein (CA) were not present for the vote.

## **[Suit Filed to Save Habitat From Toxic Pesticides](#)**

The Center for Biological Diversity just sued the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect endangered species from pesticides in critical habitat. The federal government has repeatedly found that pesticides harm most plants and animals protected by the Endangered Species Act. These poisons are driving species like rusty patched bumblebees and California spotted owls — both recently protected after years of Center legal work — toward extinction.

Yet the Service hasn't set up any on-the-ground measures to save species from any pesticides, even in habitat the agency itself set aside to protect them. Our lawsuit aims to fix that.

"The Service can't keep ignoring its duty to protect habitat that's crucial to our most endangered wildlife and plants," said Center lawyer Stephanie Parent. Like critical habitat,

national wildlife refuges were created to protect imperiled species — but the Service allows pesticides in refuges, too. (Center for Biological Diversity)

### [New Mexico Mural Art Features Endangered Species, Migration Themes](#)

The Village of Doña Ana is New Mexico's oldest federally designated settlement, and about to be the newest destination for public art. The Endangered Species Coalition is spearheading mural projects in locations across the U.S. this year - celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. Raquel Madrigal, a mural artist who was chosen for two projects in southern New Mexico, said the mural in Doña Ana includes images of the endangered boreal owl and Gila monster lizard. She believes the accessibility of public art promotes community. (Roz Brown, Public News Service (NM))

### [Federal Spending and Policy Recommendations for Bird Conservation](#)

Appropriations season is in full swing. This annual process determines federal government funding for the year ahead. Congress has until October 1, the beginning of the new fiscal year (FY), to pass an appropriations bill or a continuing resolution (CR) to avoid a government shutdown. American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is weighing in on this process to ensure that bird conservation programs are funded by Congress and to advance needed policy changes. ABC sent Congress a paper outlining the programs that need to be funded and the report language (language that specifies how funds are to be spent) that needs to be included to conserve birds.

### [The Biden Administration's Bird Conservation Achievements](#)

In January 2021, President Biden signed the "Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad," which advanced domestic climate change policy and a goal to conserve at least 30 percent of lands and waters by 2030 (30 x 30). This later came to be known as the "America the Beautiful" initiative. The executive order tasked the Interior Department with several objectives including providing progress reports on conservation efforts. In May 2021, the first report, "Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful" was released. (ABC Action Fund)

### [4 Reasons to Improve Bureau of Land Management Conservation Policies](#)

The BLM will, in the coming weeks, seek public input on a proposed rule to update and modernize the agency's tools and strategies for managing America's public lands. With climate change increasingly affecting the nation's public lands and waters, and the growing importance of those spaces for recreation and ecosystem health, the proposed rule would help protect abundant and well-connected wildlife habitat, clean drinking water sources, and tourism- and recreation-related revenue for local economies. Here are four reasons why the agency's action is needed. (Pew)

### **A New Framework for Minimizing Offshore Wind Development Impacts on Birds**

[A recent research paper](#) provides a comprehensive framework for conserving and mitigating negative impacts to birds from offshore wind development. Offshore wind development is set to rapidly proliferate in United States waters in coming years, and having a robust process for evaluating projects is vital for bird conservation.

### **The National Renewable Energy Lab Identifies Potential Population-level Impacts to Birds as a Danger from Wind Energy**

[A recent report](#) from the National Renewable Energy Lab noted that one of the major challenges to renewable energy development in the Great Lakes region was from potential population-level impacts to birds. Just as on our continental shelves, offshore wind development in the Great Lakes is poised to rapidly develop in coming years despite growing concern over the cumulative impacts of these projects upon fragile bird populations that rely upon this migratory crossroads.

### **Criminal cases for killing eagles decline as wind turbine dangers grow**

...said Steve Holmer, vice president of policy at the *American Bird Conservancy*. Under the Biden administration, he said, the wildlife...

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Issues Final Mitigation Rules**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is issuing two final policies that will guide its review of the potential impacts of land and water development projects on America's wildlife and their habitats. The revised Mitigation Policy and Endangered Species Act (ESA) Compensatory Mitigation Policy provide a broad and flexible framework to facilitate mitigation that more effectively avoids, minimizes and offsets the negative impacts of development activities. Through collaborative mitigation planning, the revised policies will help reduce human impact on the environment. The revised Mitigation Policy is available at <https://www.fws.gov/policy/a1501fw2.pdf> and the revised ESA Compensatory Mitigation Policy is available at <https://www.fws.gov/policy/a1501fw3.pdf>.

### **New Paper Links Agricultural Intensification to Bird Declines in the EU**

A [new paper](#) from Rigal et al. in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences find "that agricultural intensification, in particular pesticides and fertilizer use, is the main pressure for most bird population declines, especially for invertebrate feeders." The paper examined several different drivers of bird decline and examined how they affect different broad groups of birds. Far and away, agricultural intensification had the greatest negative effect.

### **[Understanding Red Knot surveys in Delaware Bay | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#)**

For the last couple of years, things haven't been adding up for rufa red knots in Delaware Bay. Each spring, thousands of these robin-sized shorebirds stop on bay beaches to rest and

refuel, gorging on horseshoe crab eggs to gain weight for the final leg of their migration to nesting grounds in Canada's Arctic tundra. Around the same time, biologists flock to the bay to count them. But recently, the two methods biologists use to survey rufa red knots have been telling different stories about the number that visit the bay, known as the stopover population. [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

### **Maryland Legislative Accomplishments in Spring 2023**

Maryland's annual legislation session ended on April 6 with a round of last-minute legislative wins that help advance Audubon's regional environmental agenda. Many thanks to the hundreds of Maryland Audubon supporters who weighed in with their legislators over the past three months. We could not have done it without you.

Highlights include:

The Forest Conservation Act, which will update forest conservation goals and definitions to reflect new data, protect and conserve more forest land, and give local governments flexibility to pursue solutions that advance equity.

The Power Act, which sets the goal of Maryland producing 8.5 gigawatts of off-shore wind by 2031 and updating the state's transmission grid. This is a significant step forward in climate action as increasing renewable energy production will work to mitigate climate change induced habitat loss throughout the region.

The Maryland Sustainable Buildings requires all buildings receiving 50% public funding in Maryland to meet the LEED standards that prevent bird collisions and conserve building energy usage. Read the press release [here](#).

Make Community Solar Permanent, which makes permanent a community solar pilot project, with the goal of incentivizing access to renewable energy by low- and moderate-income residents.

And the Pollinator-Friendly Powerlines Bill, which prohibits the enforcement of "weed" height ordinances some powerline corridors and allows electric utilities to create pollinator friendly habitat in those corridors rather than continual mowing. (Mid-Atlantic Audubon)

PFAS in Pesticides Testing Bill, which requires the Maryland Department of Agriculture to conduct a pilot study on how to detect per- and polyfluroalkyl substances (PFAS) in pesticides commonly used for agriculture.