



*Bringing back the birds*

*Inside Bird Conservation March 2023*

### [Biden-Harris Administration Takes New Action to Conserve and Restore America's Lands and Waters](#)

The President will direct the Secretary of Commerce to consider initiating a new National Marine Sanctuary designation within the next 30 days to protect all U.S. waters around the Pacific Remote Islands. If completed, the new sanctuary would ensure the U.S. will reach the President's goal of conserving at least 30% of ocean waters under American jurisdiction by 2030.

### **Interior Highlights \$2 Billion in Everglades Restoration Funding**



Secretary Haaland and Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Shannon Estenoz spent several days in South Florida, highlighting the Biden-Harris administration's unprecedented cross-agency investments in the Everglades ecosystem, including resources for wildlife crossings, fish passages, ecosystem restoration, clean water and natural resilience.

### [Hirono, Schatz, Case, Tokuda Urge National Park Service to Protect Hawaii's Critically Endangered Native Forest Birds](#)

Native Hawaiian forest birds are imperiled by the spread of avian malaria; four Hawaiian honeycreepers are at risk of extinction within the next ten years. To prevent this, the Hawaii Congressional delegation—U.S. Senators Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Representatives Ed Case (D-HI) and Jill Tokuda (D-HI)—sent a letter to Charles “Chuck” Sams, Director of the National Park Service (NPS), urging the agency to prioritize its efforts to protect critically endangered Native Hawaiian forest birds. In their letter, the lawmakers urge NPS to use funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) passed last year to continue efforts to protect native forest birds at Haleakala National Park on Maui.

### [Why Hawaii might release millions of mosquitos in Maui](#)

Chris Farmer, the Hawaii program director of the *American Bird Conservancy*, estimates that the akohekohe and kiwikiu could go...

### [Webinar: "What to Expect for Bird Conservation in a Split Congress."](#)



The banner features the American Bird Conservancy Action Fund logo on the left. The title "Webinar: What to Expect for Bird Conservation in a Split Congress" is centered in white text on a teal background. Below the title are three portrait photos of speakers: Steve Holmer (ABC/ABC Action Fund Vice President of Policy), Marci Eggers (ABC Director of Migratory Bird Habitats in Latin America and the Caribbean), and Steve Riley (ABC Director of Farm Bill Policy). On the right side of the banner is a photograph of the U.S. Capitol dome with two birds in flight against a teal sky.

ABC staff discusses the 2023 Farm Bill, the benefits and funding needs of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, and other legislative and regulatory updates.

## 2023 Farm Bill and Bird Conservation

### [This Year's Farm Bill Could Be a Game-Changer for the Most Imperiled U.S. Land Birds](#)

North America's grassland birds are disappearing at an alarming rate, with many considered to be at a conservation “tipping point.” One of the surest ways to turn the tide in their favor could be a sweeping piece of agricultural legislation known as the Farm Bill, which happens to be the single-biggest source of conservation funding ... [Read More>>](#)

Thanks for attending our conversation about the Farm Bill and its role in conserving birds! Here's the [webinar recording](#) to watch and share with friends. You can also read through some of the [questions and answers](#) exchanged in the Zoom Q&A box.

## [Groups Call for Added Incentive to Rest Pastures in the 2023 Farm Bill to Aid Grassland Birds](#)

Rest-Recover-Recapture is an important component of our overall 2023 Farm Bill Platform we are calling Bird Saver. As the name implies, we know that adding rest to grazing systems will afford many conservation benefits while improving productivity for ranching.

Conservation benefits that can be expected include increases in plant species diversity, ecological heterogeneity, soil health, stability, resilience and sustainability. Grassland bird recruitment rates are also higher on rested lands. Rest also expands the root system, which is a clear win in the race to capture more carbon.

One in four acres in the U.S. is grazing and pastureland. There are over 400 million acres of rangelands in our country. Because these rangelands are largely native and because they are relatively inexpensive to rent, conservation is both less expensive and less intensive. It is seldom that so many positives can be garnered from a simple act, but rest is a natural part of grassland ecosystems. Since 1970 we have lost about half of the overall population of grassland birds. Improving rangelands by incentivizing rest, especially in more arid grasslands, is vital for the recovery of grassland birds.

### [Bird Saver Factsheet – Farm Bill Recommendations](#)

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) will work with Congress and the Administration to pass a 2023 Bird-Friendly Farm Bill that:

1. Encourages broader conservation easements use to protect key habitats for birds.
2. Incentivizes rangeland rest in grazing systems to capture carbon, conserve birds, and expand grassland-conserving policies.
3. Prioritizes diverse stands of native plants, limits the use of non-native plants, and reinforces the National Seed Strategy.

### [Prairie Plight: Five of the Fastest Declining Grassland Birds in the U.S.](#)

According to some estimates, around 360 million acres of North America's original native prairies have already been lost through conversion to croplands, degradation from over-grazing, and the encroachment of woody plants due to fire suppression. Not surprisingly, the birds that rely on this habitat are in trouble.

### [Patching the Tattered Fabric, One Farm Bill at a Time](#)

I remember being in the outdoors often with my father when I was a boy. My Dad, Zene, was an avid hunter, angler, and unintentional naturalist, and we were in the fields or at the lake nearly daily. Zene was an Iowa farm boy who grew up to be a career military man. Nature was ... [Read More>>](#)

### [Bycatch: One of Seabirds' Greatest Threats](#)

Seabirds are [one of the most](#) threatened bird groups. [14 species](#) of the world's 22 Albatrosses are considered Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable according to the *International Union for Conservation of Nature's* [Red List](#). Seabirds face a variety of threats, the top three being invasive species, climate change, and [fisheries bycatch](#).

Bycatch reduction strategies are proven to save seabirds and ensure that fisheries operate sustainably. Reduction approaches look different depending on the type of fishery. For example, longline fisheries can puttori (streamer) lines above the fishing line, distracting birds and reducing the incidences of them diving for food and becoming hooked. Other strategies include setting lines at night because most seabirds feed during the day and better discard and offal management so that fishing vessels attract fewer seabirds.

The [Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act](#) would implement the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) in an effort to push for stronger international conservation standards. By becoming a party to the agreement, the U.S. can solidify its leadership in seabird conservation and encourage other countries to do the same.

### [Ocean Plastics and Seabirds](#)

In 2010, scientists estimated that between [4.8 to 12.7 million metric tons \(MT\)](#) of plastic waste entered the ocean that year. Seabirds consume microplastics, mistaking them for food. Entanglement with consumer products like single-use plastic bags and fishing lines, is another danger plastics pose to seabirds and marine life. Scientists estimate that [90 percent](#) of seabirds have ingested plastic.

### **Scientists Call on Pet Owners to Keep Cats Indoors**

[Herrera et al. \(2022\)](#) identified areas with the greatest potential for risks to and from domestic cats in Washington, D.C. Results indicated high temporal overlap between cats and native mammals (except Eastern Gray Squirrel and Eastern Chipmunk) across a 24-hour daily period. The researchers concluded that cats respond primarily to anthropogenic variables and that “since temporal overlap is ubiquitous, management strategies should focus on spatially separating cats from wildlife” to reduce risks to both cats and wildlife.

Read [this article from Salon](#) for more coverage of the study.

### **Pesticides and Birds**

#### [Coalition of 65+ Groups Urge EPA to Reform Bee- and Bird-Killing Pesticides](#)

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) and American Bird Conservancy (ABC) spearheaded a regulatory filing with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on behalf of 65 nonprofit groups to propose major reforms in the way the agency regulates

systemic insecticides. It focuses in particular on neonicotinoids (neonics), systemic pesticides often applied as agricultural seed coatings. Since 1984, pesticides have not been required to submit efficacy data as part of the registration or reregistration process. The petition would lift this waiver for systemic insecticides including neonicotinoids, effectively requiring registrants to prove their products work as intended before going to market. [Read More>>](#)

*Buffalo News* - [Another Voice: Neonics are a grave threat to birds and other wildlife](#) by E. Hardy Kern, American Bird Conservancy

### [Environmental Groups to EPA: More Stringent Rodenticide Protections Needed](#)

The letter urges the Environmental Protection Agency “to take drastic measures to protect wildlife from rodenticides by limiting their use and reducing non-target organism impacts.”

### [Colorado lawmakers consider bill to set up nontoxic bullet replacement pilot program](#)

Colorado lawmakers are considering a bill that would set up a pilot program to try to incentivize hunters to exchange their lead-based bullets for nontoxic ammunition. [House Bill 23-1936](#) would set up a two-year pilot program run through Colorado Parks and Wildlife, directing the agency to work with nongovernmental entities to educate hunters on the dangers of lead-based bullets.

### **Rodenticides Named by USFWS as Threat to California Spotted Owls**

In the [announcement](#) by USFWS proposing the listing of two distinct populations California Spotted Owl, rodenticide poisoning was listed as a threat “likely because of ingestion of exposed prey animals, known as secondary exposure,” states the listing. Though secondary exposure may only affect a few individuals, the extraordinarily small wild populations of Spotted Owls means the loss of even one Owl may have catastrophic consequences. ABC’s recent comments on the Rodenticide Proposed Interim Decision from EPA call for more restrictions on all anticoagulant rodenticides to prevent additional non-target organism poisonings.

### **PACTPA Reintroduced in Senate**

The Protect America’s Children from Toxic Pesticides Act has been [reintroduced](#) in the Senate by Senator Cory Booker. Senators Kirsten Gillibrand, Bernard Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and Brian Schatz joined as cosponsors on this important piece of legislation which would cancel registrations of some of the most devastating pesticides currently in use. Paraquat, chlorpyrifos, and neonicotinoids would be suspended, and additional protections for farmworkers and at-risk communities would be created by provisions in the bill. Tell your Senators to support the bill [here](#).

### **Minnesota Bill would Ban Lead Sinkers under 2.5oz**

A [new bill](#) in the Minnesota State House of Representatives would phase out small lead sinkers and other fishing tackle. Citing risks to birds, including the Common Loon, Minnesota's state bird, the bill would ban the sale or manufacturing of lead fishing tackle under 2.5oz. Many birds accidentally ingest lead sinkers and jigs when consuming fish or grit; a single lead sinker is enough to kill a Swan. The bill's provisions would not take effect until 2026.

### **District of Columbia Bird-Bill Victory**

This January DC Mayor Muriel Bowser signed the Migratory Local Wildlife Protection Act. We describe the importance of this model bill here: <https://conta.cc/3Cmx1zk> Among other things, this "bird bill" would require that for building permits for new construction or alterations involving glass the use of bird-friendly materials would be necessary. The Department of Buildings, in consultation with the Department of Energy and Environment, would also have to issue regulations accordingly. (Birding Community E-Bulletin)

### **\$7 Billion for Home Solar**

In a [news release issued by EPA](#) Sen. Sanders said, "I am pleased to say that the funding announced today will include a \$7 billion residential solar program that I introduced to make it more affordable for low-income and working-class families to install solar on their homes and save money on their electricity bills." Under EPA's newly announced approach to the \$7 billion program, dubbed the "Zero-Emissions Technology Fund Competition," up to 60 grants will be awarded to states, cities, Native American tribes and eligible nonprofits to prioritize "delivering financial and technical assistance to projects that deploy residential and community solar, associated storage technologies, and related upgrades." (*E and E News*)

### **New French law will blanket parking lots with solar panels**

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2023/02/06/france-solar-parking-lots/>