

THE STATE OF THE BIRDS 2019

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICA'S BIRDS IN CRISIS

2.5 BILLION BIRDS GONE
SINCE 1970

**One-fourth of all North American birds
have disappeared in the last 50 years:**

New research published in the journal *Science* shows massive losses in North American bird populations—with steep declines for bird species in every biome on the continent.

Total Population of North American Birds, including 530 Species

9 billion

8 billion

7 billion

6 billion

1970

1980

1990

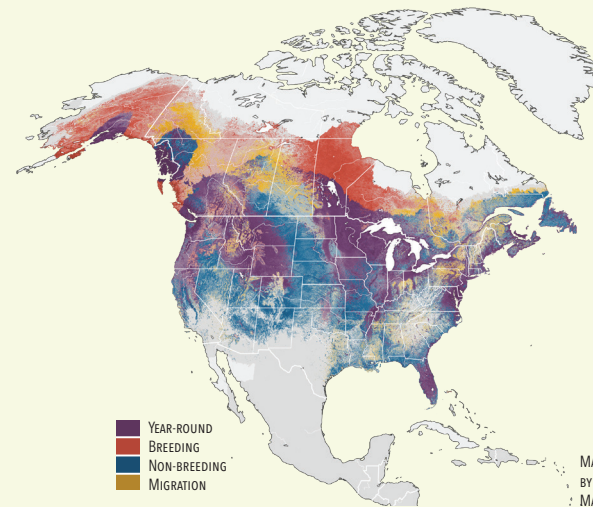
2000

2010

2017

BUT CONSERVATION WORKS!

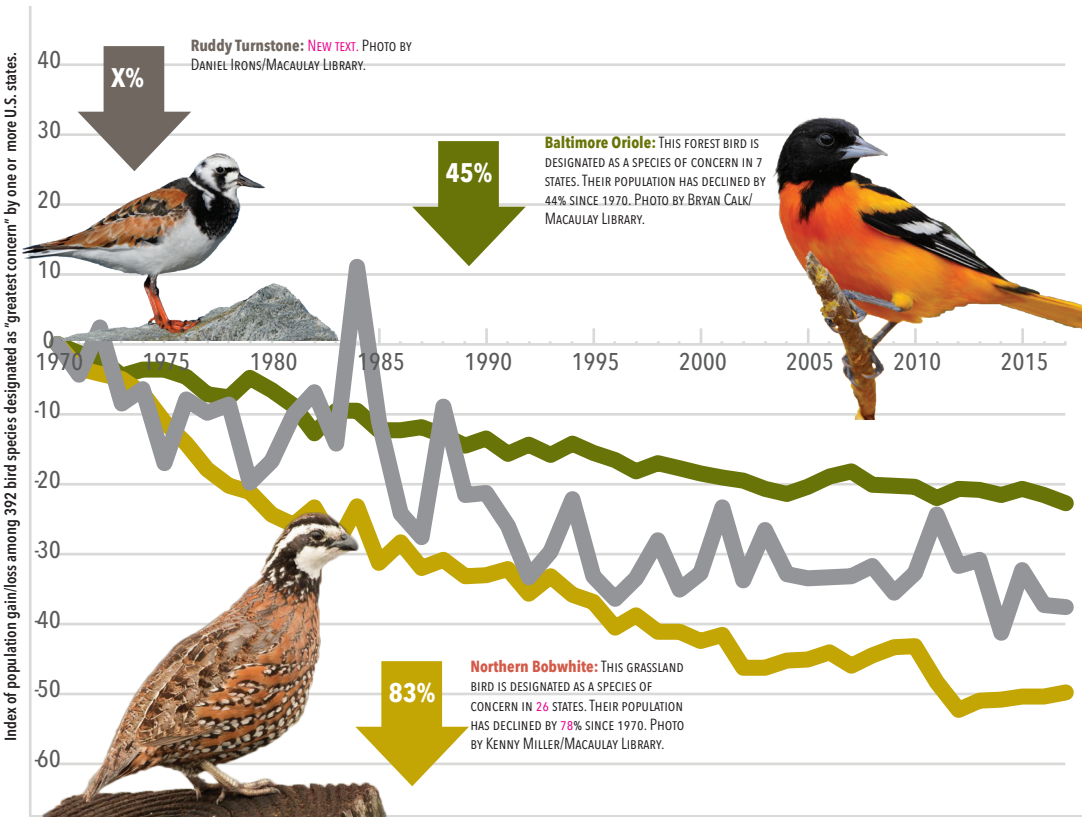
RECOVERY IS
POSSIBLE
WHEN WE
INVEST IN BIRDS



MAP SHOWS CURRENT BALD EAGLE ABUNDANCE
BY SEASON BASED ON EBIRD DATA. PHOTO BY TOM
MAST/MACAULAY LIBRARY.

Our national bird, an icon of wildlife recovery: In 1970 there were just a few hundred Bald Eagle pairs left in North America—a 99% loss. Conservation programs and species protections sparked a remarkable recovery. The Bald Eagle was delisted from Endangered Species status in 2007, and today 10,000+ eagle pairs live in nearly all 50 states.

AMERICA'S BIRDS ARE IN STEEP DECLINE



Forest Birds 22 % decrease since 1970

Forest birds have experienced consistent declines, with big losses among beloved species such as Wood Thrush and Baltimore Oriole. Altogether, forest bird populations have lost 1.2 billion birds since 1970.

Shorebirds 50% decrease since 1970

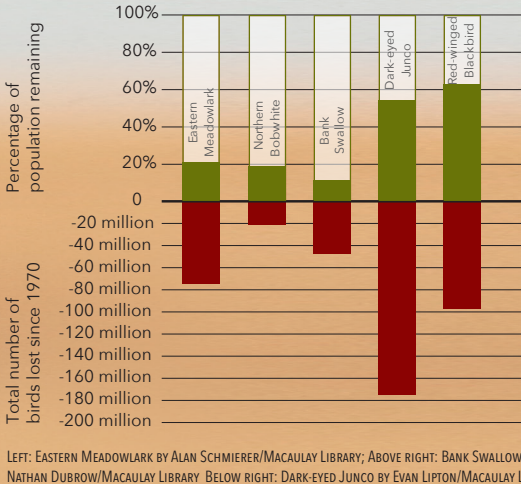
Shorebirds include many migratory species such as Ruddy Turnstone and Semipalmated Sandpiper that are declining fast, with critically low populations that may soon trigger Endangered Species Act listings.

Grassland Birds 50% decrease since 1970

Grassland birds have suffered the steepest losses, with a population decline by 700 million birds. The biggest declines are among birds beloved by birdwatchers and hunters alike, such as meadowlark and Northern Bobwhite.

BIG LOSSES AMONG SOME OF OUR MOST BELOVED BIRDS

The pervasive declines among North American bird life spread well beyond the most rare and threatened species; it is a crisis for almost all birds everywhere. Just 15 of the 500+ bird species in the U.S. and Canada account for more than two-thirds of the total loss in continental native bird populations. These are species that people consider “common birds” (such as meadowlarks, juncos, blackbirds, and swallows) that were once abundant, but now suffering population losses in the millions—similar to the decline of the Passenger Pigeon.



LEFT: EASTERN MEADOWLARK BY ALAN SCHMIERER/MACAULAY LIBRARY; ABOVE RIGHT: BANK SWALLOW BY NATHAN DUBROW/MACAULAY LIBRARY; BELOW RIGHT: DARK-EYED JUNCO BY EVAN LIPTON/MACAULAY LIBRARY



REMARKABLE RECOVERIES

Waterfowl serve as a model for how habitat protection and restoration can reverse bird declines.

Waterfowl 40 % increase since 1970

Waterfowl are one of America's best wildlife success stories, thanks to federal investments such as the Duck Stamp and North American Wetlands Conservation Act that powered state waterfowl conservation efforts.



Raptors show what a big difference states can make in species protection.

Raptors 54% increase since 1970

Hawks and eagles buck the general trend of declining birds thanks to strong state protections from shooting, as well as the reduction of harmful pollutants such as DDT.



STATE WILDLIFE AGENCIES HAVE THE PLANS TO STOP MASSIVE BIRD DECLINES, BUT OUR STATES CAN'T DO IT ALONE. PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY.

State Wildlife Action Plans

America's state wildlife agencies have identified our “species of greatest conservation need”—the birds and other wildlife at risk of becoming endangered. Each state has developed a State Wildlife Action Plan, a science-based plan that includes specific actions and habitat restoration priorities that can turn around declining populations.

- All 50 state wildlife agencies have written action plans for every species of greatest conservation need, including 400+ bird species.
- Each plan includes voluntary, non-regulatory measures that are proven to prevent Endangered Species listings.
- Currently, our nation's State Wildlife Action Plans receive **XX%** of the required funding for successful implementation.



COMMON NIGHTHAWK POPULATIONS HAVE DROPPED BY **XX%** OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS. PHOTO BY ALEX LAMOREAUX/MACAULAY LIBRARY

Number of states in which each species is designated a species of greatest conservation concern

Common Nighthawk	27 states
Population loss since 1970: 25 million birds	
Northern Bobwhite	26 states
Population loss since 1970: 20 million birds	
Eastern Meadowlark	26 states
Population loss since 1970: 74 million birds	
American Woodcock	29 states
Population loss since 1970: 1.5 million birds	
Short-eared Owl	36 states
Population loss since 1970: 600,000 birds	

Migratory Bird Joint Ventures

With crucial funding through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and locally driven management authority, states are partnering with federal agencies, non-profit groups, corporations, and tribes on Migratory Bird Joint Ventures—regional conservation collaboratives with a track record of innovating effective conservation models.

- More than 20 Migratory Bird Joint Ventures have restored and conserved 27 million acres of habitat in the Lower 48 States and Alaska.
- Joint Ventures use a strategic business-planning model that emphasizes cost-efficiency and voluntary, proactive conservation.
- Joint Ventures are a powerful conservation multiplier, growing every federal \$1 into more than \$30 in matching conservation funds.

THE ANSWERS TO AMERICA'S BIRD CRISIS

Habitat loss is the leading driver of bird population declines, but the problem affects far more than just birds. Damage to bird habitats also impacts drinking water quality from freshwater resources, game and other wildlife species, and the \$646 billion outdoor-recreation economy. Federal and state governments can empower a triumphant recovery with policies that attack the roots of the problem.



The Cornerstones of Successful Conservation Policy

Three cornerstone conservation acts—the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Act, and the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill—are the key drivers of conservation policy for birds. All require a federal commitment to future funding.

The Blue Ribbon Panel Proposal

In 2016, a panel of business and conservation experts—chaired by former Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal and Bass Pro Shops founder John Morris—studied the wildlife crisis and wrote a plan to direct \$1.3 billion in existing federal revenue to State Wildlife Action Plans annually, with no cost impacts to taxpayers, consumers, or businesses.

A No-Net-Loss Grasslands Policy

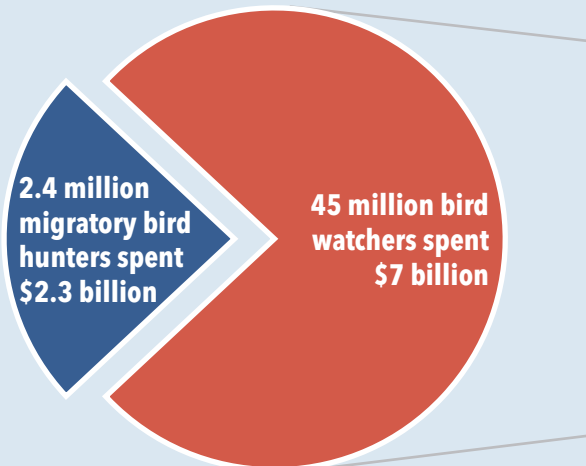
Modeled after George H. W. Bush's famous No-Net-Loss Wetlands policy, a similar grasslands policy would halt the ongoing destruction of prairie and grassy buffer lands along waterways. In 2014 the U.S.A. lost more prairie acres than the Amazon lost rainforest. Grasslands destruction not only impacts grassland birds, but also removes natural ecosystem filtration buffers and causes drinking water impairment.

Strategies to Minimize Direct Bird Kills

NABCI partners have developed strategies to reduce the anthropogenic (or human-caused) threats to birds beyond habitat loss, with proposals for addressing feral cat colonies on public lands, reducing collisions through bird-friendly building codes, and transitioning to green energy through bird-friendly wind and solar energy development.

Left: Horned Lark by Gerrit Vyn. Horned Larks are listed as a species of greatest conservation concern in 10 states, and their populations have dropped by 191 million since 1970, leaving only 31% remaining.

**BIRDS
ARE
BIG
BUSINESS!**



>\$1 billion

Binoculars and spotting scopes

>\$1 billion

Cameras

>\$1 billion

Bird Feeders and Nest Boxes

>\$4 billion

Wild Bird Food Sales

Source: USFWS 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-associated Recreation



The U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative is a forum of government agencies, non-government organizations, and bird initiatives helping partners across the continent meet their common bird conservation objectives.