

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Audubon COMMON BIRDS IN DECLINE

*A State of the Birds Report
Summer 2007*

PRESERVE FARMLANDS

Promote strong conservation provisions in the federal farm bill, especially the Conservation Reserve Program, which pays farmers to keep marginal farmlands idle and supports millions of acres of good bird habitat. Contact your county's office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Farm Service Agency to find out how to increase the acreage devoted to helping birds dependent on working lands. (www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/crp/)

Winners: Northern bobwhite, northern pintail, eastern meadowlark, loggerhead shrike, field sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, lark sparrow, American bittern, horned lark, little blue heron

SAVE GRASSLANDS

Be proactive with your local, state, and national officials to increase the amount of habitat that can support breeding grassland birds. In particular, support smart growth and the protection of open space. Promote late mowing (preferably early August in most parts of the country) in hayfields and healthy public and private lands used for livestock grazing. Urge parks to devote large parcels to prairie restoration. Volunteer at an Important Bird Area (IBA) where it is appropriate to improve habitat for grass- and shrub-nesting birds. (www.audubon.org/bird/iba/; www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/GRP)

Winners: Northern bobwhite, eastern meadowlark, loggerhead shrike, grasshopper sparrow, black-throated sparrow, lark sparrow

CONSERVE WETLANDS

Support wetlands programs, including the Clean Water Act, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and such farm bill conservation programs as the Wetlands

Reserve Program and the "swampbuster" rule (which restricts wetlands from being converted to agriculture). Encourage governments at all levels to enact and enforce wetlands protection and water-quality regulations. (www.epa.gov/OWOW/wetlands/vital/toc.html)

Winners: Common tern, northern pintail, greater scaup, American bittern, little blue heron

HALT GLOBAL WARMING

Back federal, state, and local legislation to cap greenhouse-gas emissions and spur the development of alternative energy sources. Practice what you preach at home and work. (www.audubon.org/globalWarming/BePartSolution.php)

Winners: Evening grosbeak, northern pintail, greater scaup, boreal chickadee, black-throated sparrow, snow bunting, horned lark

SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FORESTS

Push for the protection, restoration, and expansion of large forest blocks—especially the Canadian boreal forest, where logging, mining, and drilling are taking a toll—to sustain the full range of forest-loving species. Back active management (including burns) to meet specific habitat requirements on government-owned lands, and incentives for active forest management on private lands. Promote deer management that sustains forest understory plants. (www.borealbirds.org/)

Winners: Whip-poor-will, ruffed grouse, northern bobwhite, loggerhead shrike. Boreal species: Common tern, evening grosbeak, northern pintail, boreal chickadee, common grackle, American bittern, rufous hummingbird, ruffed grouse

STOP INVASIVE SPECIES

Work with county ag officials to fight the spread of non-native grasses. Support federal, regional, state, and local regulations and research and management to curb exotic, invasive plants. (www.fws.gov/species/#invasive)

Winners: Greater scaup (by eliminating aquatic invasives), black-throated sparrow, lark sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, loggerhead

shrike, eastern meadowlark, northern bobwhite

PATROL BEACHES

Join beach watches to look for oiled birds or other signs of coastal pollution. Lobby federal, state, and local officials to maintain wildlife-friendly beaches and clean waters. (www.audubon.org/bird/cbcp/)

Winners: Greater scaup, snow bunting, common tern, little blue heron

MONITOR FEEDERS

If you see dead or diseased birds on or near your feeders, don't put out food for two weeks, so the birds can disperse. Also, clean feeders before reusing them. If you have rufous hummingbirds (in any season), offer hummingbird flowers and sugar-water feeders (change the water weekly or more often if it's hot). (www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_feeding/index.html)

Winners: Evening grosbeak, boreal chickadee, rufous hummingbird

GET OUT AND COUNT

Join the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and the Breeding Bird Survey (if you know your local birds by sight and sound) to help collect the data that allows scientists to track bird populations, and contributes to reports like this one, as well as to the updated Audubon WatchList of all North American bird species at risk.

(www.audubon.org/bird/cbc; www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBS/)

TAKE OUR CUE

Many Audubon efforts aid birds mentioned in this report—from Project Puffin's work with common terns and Audubon Texas's conservation projects for bobwhite quail to Audubon Chicago's and the Arizona Research Ranch's grassland restoration programs to Audubon North Dakota's pintail projects. Work with your local Audubon chapter, center, or state office to help out at a local IBA (www.audubon.org/bird/iba/index.html). Visit our website (<http://audubonaction.org/audubon/join.html>) to become a national Audubon policy activist.