



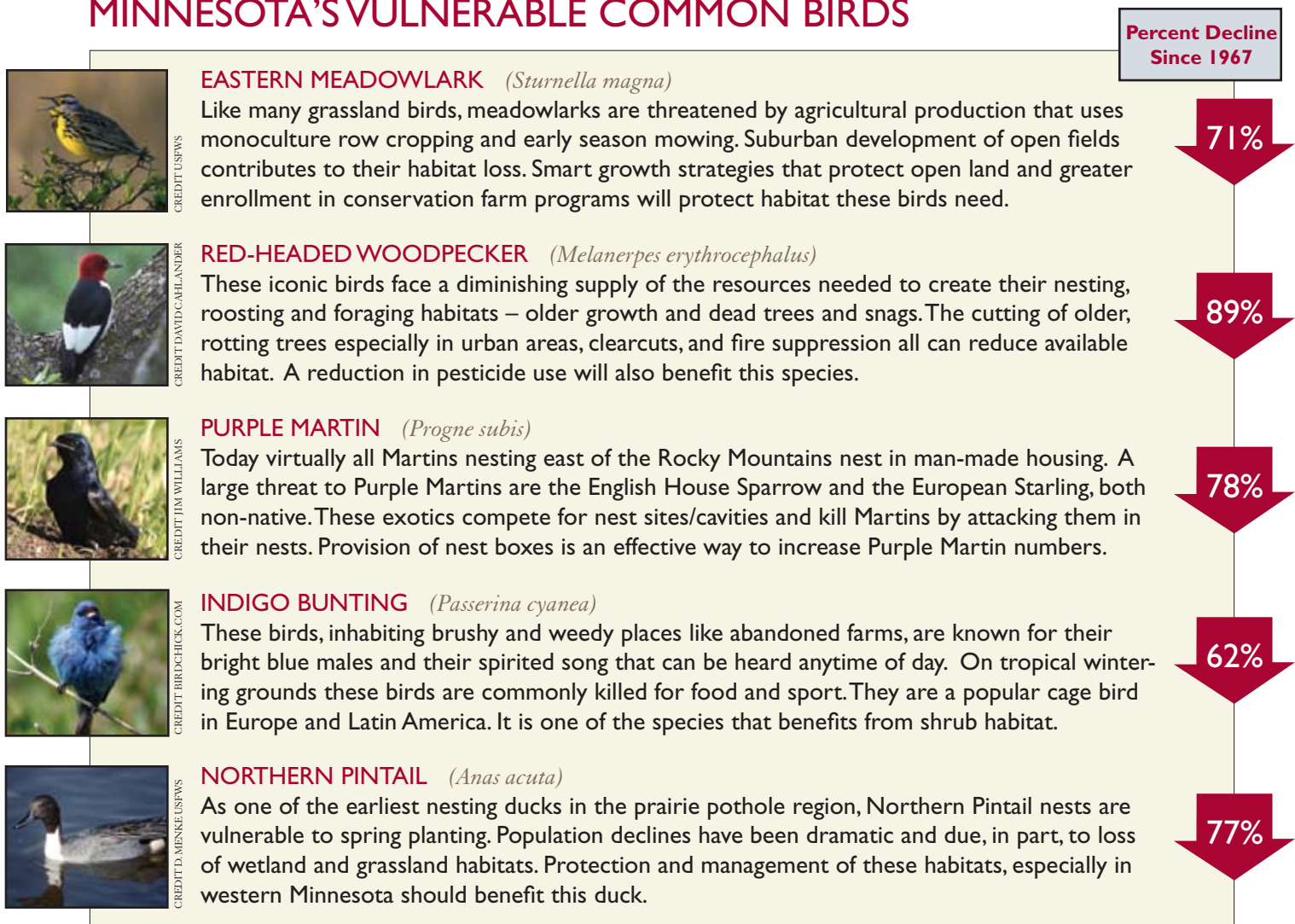
[*A State of the Birds Report from the Minnesota State Office of the National Audubon Society*]

COMMON BIRDS IN DECLINE

Many of our most common and beloved birds are experiencing precipitous population declines. Analyzing 40 years of population information collected by citizen scientists for Audubon's Christmas Bird Count and combining this with the Breeding Bird Survey data from the U.S. Geological Survey, Audubon has identified the most vulnerable common birds at the national and state levels.

The results are sobering. Of the 20 fastest declining common bird species in the nation, 16 are in Minnesota. Many are showing declines of nearly 80 percent since 1967. In Minnesota, we find many additional species experiencing steep declines as well. These birds will be added as priority conservation targets in our projects in the coming months. Working with our chapters, partners, and people like you, we can make a difference for Minnesota's birds.

MINNESOTA'S VULNERABLE COMMON BIRDS



MINNESOTA HABITATS AT RISK



Minnesota's forests, grasslands, wetlands, lakes and rivers host over 400 species of birds. This diversity of birds is the result of the variety of habitats found across Minnesota as the state straddles three very different ecological boundaries. We have the boreal forest, the prairie/hardwood transition zone and the prairie grasslands. Within each are many smaller habitats that create specialized niches for a variety of birds. However, many of these habitats face a number of threats. Forest habitat is being degraded by fragmentation, particularly as large forest blocks are being sold. There is tremendous development pressure on our private lakeshores that are often converted to a lawn as might be found in the city. Despite laws, wetlands continue to be lost to agriculture or development. Meanwhile, populations of grassland birds like the meadowlarks are dropping due to suburban and agricultural development on open grasslands, as well as early-season mowing and conversion to row crops.

WHAT AUDUBON MINNESOTA IS DOING



Minnesotans care deeply about birds and their habitats. Audubon Minnesota is working with volunteers across the state to monitor bird populations and promote awareness and sound stewardship on the ground.

Our Important Bird Area program is identifying critical bird habitat in the state and we have begun to work with partners to promote bird conservation in these areas. Our state members, over 10,000 strong, are effective advocates with their federal, state, and local elected officials in speaking up for laws and policies that promote environmental protection, such as our successful efforts to pass a Great Lakes Compact earlier this year and the progress made

in achieving dedicated funding for natural resources. And our 14 chapters around the state promote environmental awareness through the field trips, school programs, and regular public meetings they organize and conduct.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Minnesotans can help keep common birds common in a variety of ways. • You can play a critical role in helping to determine bird population trends by taking part in bird monitoring projects such as the Christmas Bird Count and the



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Great Backyard Bird Count. • Contact your elected officials at least once a year to express your support for environmental initiatives, such as better funding for conservation. • Email mnaudubon@audubon.org to sign up for our electronic newsletter to keep abreast of current issues. • Help restore, enhance or protect habitats beneficial to birds in your own backyard. By planting native vegetation, you can provide badly needed food and cover. • Put up a martin house or other bird house if appropriate. • Volunteer at a local park, nature center, or wildlife refuge. • State and federal wildlife agencies have many programs to assist landowners with habitat enhancement or restoration projects. • Provide financial support to conservation groups and help with habitat protection by purchasing an annual duck stamp and endangered resources vehicle license.

For more information on what you can do to help birds, visit our web site at <http://mn.audubon.org>.

AUDUBON MINNESOTA

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