



## State of the Birds on Private Lands

The *State of the Birds* reports are valuable conservation tools produced by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. These reports examine the status of birds in the United States and identify high-priority conservation solutions. Bird conservation is relevant to every American because the same landscapes that support diverse and abundant bird communities also provide vital services to humans. This year's State of the Birds report focuses on private lands and their importance for successful stewardship of birds and their habitats in the United States.

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### ***Private lands and private landowners are essential to the conservation of our nation's birds***

*"When land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land;  
when both end up better by reason of their partnership, we have conservation."*

*--Aldo Leopold, *The Farmer as a Conservationist**

Private landowners own and manage 1.43 billion acres (roughly 60% of the land area of the United States) of diverse habitats that are vital for bird conservation, including:

**Wetlands:** Support more than 75% of the breeding and wintering distributions of waterfowl such as American Black Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Pintails, and Wood Ducks.

**Grasslands:** Seven breeding obligate grassland bird species, including Eastern Meadowlark and Dickcissel, have more than 90% of their distribution on private lands.

**Aridlands:** Black-capped Vireo, Chihuahuan Raven, California Gnatcatcher, Pyrrhuloxia, and Scaled Quail have >74% of their distributions on the 39% of US aridlands that are privately owned.

**Forests:** Over 300 forest-breeding bird species depend on private lands to maintain forest cover and preserve the integrity of forest ecosystems.

**Coasts:** Coastal areas constitute only 9% of the total land area of the U.S. (excluding Alaska and Caribbean and Pacific Islands), but 25% of all bird species in North America use coastal habitats for some part of their annual cycle.

**Islands:** Hawai'i accounts for approximately 0.2% of the area of the U.S., yet it contains 33% of all federally endangered bird species.

### ***Conservation programs on private lands produce significant conservation outcomes***

*"Thanks to the program and some neighbors who have the same goals, the results are more quail. In just a few years, you can see a difference."*

*—David McGinnis, speaking about the Bee Ridge Quail Focus Area program*

- Through the Farm Bill's Working Lands for Wildlife Program, more than 700 ranchers are enhancing 2.5 million acres of aridland habitat for the benefit of sage-grouse.
- The Machias River Project in Maine protected 60,000 acres via purchases and easements, completing a mega block of contiguous habitat for 28 bird species of conservation concern.
- Through Mountain Plover Nest Conservation Programs in Nebraska and Colorado nearly 250 private landowners have protected more than 1,000 nests of the imperiled Mountain Plover.
- Regional spring counts of Henslow's Sparrows are now about 25 times higher than 30 years ago, prior to the Farm Bill's Conservation Reserve Program.

### ***Conservation on private lands provides substantial benefits to landowners and society***

*"Restoring marginal cropland on my farm that should have never been cleared has been one of the most fulfilling events in my farming career. It has been good for my business but great for the ducks."*

*—George Dunklin, Jr., Mississippi Alluvial Valley landowner*

- A conservation easement at the Wineinger-Davis Ranch in Colorado on 14,000 acres of shortgrass prairie helps sustain the family's livelihood, while also managing their grasslands for Mountain Plover.
- Protected wetlands in North America's Prairie Pothole region sustain the sport of waterfowl hunting, which contributes more than 27,000 jobs and \$2.3 billion annually to the U.S. economy.
- The Farm Bill's Conservation Reserve Program alone has resulted in cleaner water, with 623 million pounds of nitrogen and 124 million pounds of phosphorus intercepted and kept from our nation's waterways.

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We invite you to learn more about the state of our nation's birds and how you can demonstrate an American land ethic through our 2013 report, available on our website: [www.stateofthebirds.org](http://www.stateofthebirds.org)