**TOOLKIT FOR BIRDERS**

**RECOVERING AMERICA’S WILDLIFE: URGENT ACTION NEEDED**

**Revised May 11, 2022**

We have created this simple toolkit to help you take easy actions to engage your network and urge Congressional representatives to vote YES and pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act. Please adapt/customize as you wish.

**Cover Letter to use with your name to your network of birders:**

**An urgent message for all people who love birds.**

Birds are facing an unprecedented crisis; [**three billion**](https://www.3billionbirds.org/) **fewer** birds grace the skies of North America than in 1970. But there’s reason for hope if we act swiftly. We call on you to urge Congress to pass the [Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Policy/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act), bipartisan legislation that will provide $1.4 billion annually in wildlife conservation funding to states and tribes. **Our goal is for bill passage by this summer.**

Now is the time to act on behalf of birds that bring us joy and connect us to our communities and the world.We are racing toward the finish line, and we need every vote!

With more than 45 million people in the U.S. participating in birdwatching, you make up a powerful voice for bringing back our birds. We have created this simple toolkit to help you take easy actions to engage your network and urge Congressional representatives to vote YES and pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act.

Let’s change the course of history for birds together!

With gratitude,

ADD YOUR NAME HERE

**TOOLKIT FOR THE BIRDWATCHING COMMUNITY**

**MENU**

1. **Birders RALLY (May 24, 12-1 pm eastern)**
2. **Social Media Posts**
3. **Share this letter with birdwatchers**
4. **Run this news alert**
5. **Share script for calling Congress**
6. **Add your group to the sign-on letter of support**
7. **Examples of bird species—threats and actions**
8. **Benefits to Birders**
9. **More Resources**

**1. BIRDERS RALLY**

**JOIN US for the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act Birders’ Rally!**

**When: Tuesday, May 24, 2022 from 12 PM - 1 PM EST**

[**Register Here**](https://nwf-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMvcOqtpzgoGNXfU4qs1Xo-oXMS30Dm3zNw)

Calling all bird lovers! We need everyone who cares about birds to rally together for the passage of the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act. With historic levels of funding and support from both sides of the aisle, this once in a generation legislation is a rare bird. Join us as we flock together in support of this critical bill, which will help protect birds long into the future and make the enjoyment of birds more accessible for all! Hosted by Tykee James and Corina Newsome, this rally will feature leaders in avian conservation and give you an opportunity to take action to encourage our Members of Congress to vote YES on the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act. Bring your passion and excitement, because we need YOU to push Recovering America’s Wildlife Act over the finish line!

**2. Social Media Posts: To be sent to birder social media users/influencers for Twitter and Instagram story posts).**

Twitter (we encourage you to attach photos of birds, or of you enjoying birds, to these tweets):

* Birds are unique in their ability to connect us with the rest of the natural world. Join me, and a community of people who love birds, in protecting their future by advocating for Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act. bit.ly/3x1s90F
* Access to nature is critical for human health and wellbeing, but it has not been equally accessible for everyone. Urge Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, which will provide increased access to nature-based education and conservation! #RecoverWildlife bit.ly/3x1s90F
* Increased bird diversity has been linked with increased human emotional well-being. Urge Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, which will provide funds to #BringBirdsBack and increase access to the enjoyment of birds for all! #RecoverWildlife bit.ly/3x1s90F
* We need all-hands-on deck for wildlife conservation. Encourage Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, which will fund increased community access to environmental education and conservation! #RecoverWildlife bit.ly/3x1s90F
* Access to nature is important for human wellbeing and engaging our communities in conservation. Urge Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, which will fund increased opportunities for communities to connect with nature! #RecoverWildlife bit.ly/3x1s90F
* Birds provide countless benefits, including ecosystem health and emotional wellness. Help us give back to birds by encouraging Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, providing critical funds for the conservation of birds and other wildlife. bit.ly/3x1s90F
* Tribal Nations manage millions of acres of land and water and are working to recover more than 500 threatened and endangered species on their lands. Native people have been successful mangers of species and habitats for thousands of years and it is central to Tribal identity. bit.ly/3x1s90F
* Indigenous communities have been repeatedly excluded from wildlife conservation funds made available to states. This cannot continue. Urge Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, which will provide $97.5 M/year to tribal leadership for conservation. bit.ly/3x1s90F
* Tribal fish and wildlife management have always been excluded from dedicated annual federal conservation funds. Urge Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, which will provide $97.5 mil. annually to support indigenous-led conservation efforts. bit.ly/3x1s90F
* The moment I fell in love with birds was [*insert personal experience here*]. I want future generations to experience the beauty of birds, too. Help me encourage Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act. bit.ly/3x1s90F
* Rare birds are exciting to find, but I love the birds I see commonly in my neighborhood. Unfortunately, even our common birds have experienced major declines. Help protect your neighborhood birds by urging Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act. bit.ly/3x1s90F
* There’s nothing in the world like sharing the joy of birds with others. [share personal example]. To ensure that birds can connect people with the rest of the natural world long into the future, encourage Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act. bit.ly/3x1s90F
* From pest control to pollination, birds are critical to the health of our ecosystems. Help protect your local birds by encouraging Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, which will provide $1.3 Billion each year in wildlife conservation funding. bit.ly/3x1s90F

Instagram Story:

* Birds have given us so much…It’s time to give back to birds. Urge Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act for $1.3 B annually in conservation funds. bit.ly/3x1s90F [[Eastern meadowlark- Danny Bales](https://drive.google.com/file/d/13APH-_klLq1RsJlbdjYCebM2-_Am3UyN/view?usp=sharing)]
* Birds connect us with each other and the world around us. Help ensure that birds thrive in a changing world by urging Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, providing $1.3 B annually in conservation funds. bit.ly/3x1s90F [[People birding – John Heinz](https://www.fws.gov/media/147446)]
* Support indigenous-led conservation efforts by urging Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, securing $97.5 million annually for tribal fish and wildlife management. bit.ly/3x1s90F [[Southwestern willow flycatcher- USDA](https://www.nps.gov/grca/learn/nature/southwestern-willow-flycatcher.htm)]
* We need all-hands-on deck for wildlife conservation. Encourage Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, which will fund increased community access to environmental education and conservation! #RecoverWildlife bit.ly/3x1s90F
* From pollination to pest control, birds help our communities thrive. Urge Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act to protect your local birds. bit.ly/3x1s90F [[Hummingbird- Jim Hudgins](https://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmidwest/43227522614/)]
* Research has shown that having more birds around us increases our enjoyment of life. Be part of a community working to protect birds by urging Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, providing $1.3 B annually in wildlife conservation funding. bit.ly/3x1s90F [[People birding- Kent Miller](https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/view.htm?id=f2d106a0-155d-4fea-a744-543a52b6beb3)]
* We have 3 Billion fewer birds now than we had in 1970. It’s time to act. Urge Congress to pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, providing $1.3 B annually in wildlife conservation funding. bit.ly/3x1s90F

**3. Share this letter** with birding clubs, Audubon chapters, and other birding networks via the channels you use—from newsletters to Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Feel free to customize.

**To my fellow birdwatchers**

I have exciting news for keeping the birds we love in our lives. This is our moment to pass the federal [Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Policy/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act), the most significant investment in wildlife conservation in a generation. Will you join me in asking your members of Congress to support this urgently needed legislation? **The bipartisan bill is headed to the floor of the House and Senate, and we need every vote!**

Birds are in crisis across North America, and conditions are only worsening with extreme weather related to climate change. We are living with three billion fewer birds than in 1970—a third of all birds. Those include birds we think of as common—like red-winged blackbirds, dark-eyed juncos, and eastern meadowlarks.

The bipartisan Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will dedicate $1.3 billion for state-level conservation and $97.5 million to tribal nations. At last, we can help more than 12,000 wildlife and plants in need of proactive conservation attention as identified in State Wildlife Action Plans. Birds will see help in every state and on tribal lands—from Swainson’s hawks in California to bobolinks in Illinois, scarlet tanagers in New York.

Will you join me in making sure the children of today and tomorrow will know the serenade of meadowlarks in a wildflower meadow and the winging flights of swans overhead? Please take a few minutes to [act now.](https://support.nwfactionfund.org/page/27217/action/1?_ga=2.99311836.352547392.1649274593-922140955.1649274593)

We know from success stories that we can bring our birds back—if we work together and invest in their future. That’s exactly what this Act will do, from conserving and restoring habitats to engaging more people in planting bird-friendly gardens.

With only 5 percent of the funding needed to address the wildlife crisis, states and tribes, with partners like bird conservation groups and bird observatories, have delivered promising successes—showing what’s possible with an increased investment. The magnitude of the solution must match the magnitude of the problem and Recovering America’s Wildlife Act ensures states and tribes have the necessary funds for both recovering those already endangered and proactive collaborative actions to prevent more from becoming endangered as identified in their State Wildlife Action Plans.

Tell your friends. Enlist others. Let’s pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act! [TAKE ACTION.](https://support.nwfactionfund.org/page/27217/action/1?_ga=2.61411372.1095605684.1647359298-1334846324.1647359298)

Thank you,

(Signature)

**4.** **Run this NEWS ALERT** as soon as possible in your newsletter, on your website, action alert notices, or other places for outreach. Note: there’s a one paragraph version with the ability to link to the longer article.

**Take Action: The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act is Before Congress Now!**

We need everyone who cares about birds to rally for passage of the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act without delay. With broad bipartisan support in Congress, this historic act offers our best hope for addressing the bird crisis. More than a third of bird species in North America need urgent conservation action. This bill will invest $1.3 billion for state-level wildlife conservation and $97.5 million to tribal nations annually. Please ask your congressional representatives and Senators to support the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act.

[ACT NOW.](https://support.nwfactionfund.org/page/27217/action/1?_ga=2.62469292.1095605684.1647359298-1334846324.1647359298)

***Continue Reading (link to more below or run the entirety of the release).***

The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act offers holistic health care—focusing on prevention, wellness, and recovery to keep species out of the equivalent of hospital emergency rooms. For the more than 1,600 species listed as threatened and endangered, the funding is critical for life-saving measures, too.

Time is short, especially for birds: The latest science shows plummeting numbers of wild birds in our lives—with [3 billion fewer birds](https://www.3billionbirds.org/) than in 1970, a loss that points to unraveling of ecosystems that support them. Even familiar birds we take for granted are in trouble---meadowlarks (down by 139 million), dark-eyed juncos (down by 168 million), and white-throated sparrows (down by 93 million).

What can we expect? State fish and wildlife agencies, tribes, and many partners are ready to hit the ground running with proactive plans in place to accelerate recovery; restore, repair, and link habitats; and reintroduce species to their former homes. Habitat investments in forests, grasslands, and wetlands also yield clean water, flood prevention, and carbon capture.

An infusion of dedicated funding will generate wildlife jobs and fuel a growing outdoor recreation economy—with more birding areas, viewing towers, and nature trails. Birders alone spend $20 billion a year on bird seed, travel, and equipment. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will create an estimated 30,000 direct jobs and generate over $93 billion in total economic activity—good news for our economy and birds.

Our recent history shows when we take action, birds recover. Just in 2019, the Kirtland’s Warbler flew off the endangered species list after restoration of the Jack pine forest habitat, and a year earlier the black-capped vireo recovered—thanks to removing threats and conserving habitats. Efforts are underway to recover many declining birds before a need for listing—from the cerulean warbler to the eastern meadowlark. Passing the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act is essential for success.

Please [ACT](https://blog.nwf.org/2019/09/birds-in-crisis-how-one-bill-can-help-our-nations-winged-wonders/) today and spread the word!

Or link to this blog: <https://blog.nwf.org/2022/04/an-urgent-message-for-all-people-who-love-birds/>

**5. Sample Script** to Call Congress

I care deeply about the plummeting numbers of birds in North America —3 billion fewer in our lives today than in 1970. I’m alarmed that even birds I thought were common—like swallows and meadowlarks—are in steep decline. That’s why I’m calling you today. Will you vote for the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (HR 2773 and S. 2372)—our best chance to address this terrible crisis in time? We can bring back our birds—if we pass this bill! The Act has broad bipartisan support for proactive voluntary conservation. Can I count on you to work to pass this bill immediately?

**6.** [**Sign our letter to Congress**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScvMgnygWgk_nLeygYJ4tTVpX4bCDpFG_cbbZ_tOPA_JRwUlg/viewform)**—** [1700+ groups](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZNDlhIf9fs_g4LaRUauRxfc97UhHGhap/view?usp=sharing) have already signed, help us get to 2000! (Bird groups signed on include National Audubon Society, American Bird Conservancy, Wild Birds Unlimited, American Birding Association, and many Audubon chapters). Note: the system takes care of duplicate entries.

**7.** **Examples of Birds that will benefit from the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act.**

Examples and stories are powerful—showing threats, success, and what’s possible with investment. Feel free to use these examples from various states to add to other actions and customize for your area. The [Cornell All About Birds](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/) website is an excellent resource to fill in more details.

Here are some examples of projects identified in State Wildlife Action Plans:

**Painted Bunting (Oklahoma):** The painted bunting nests in the coastal Southeast and south-central U.S. and often visits feeders—but this brilliantly colored songbird suffers from the destruction of swampy thickets and woodland edges for urban development. Oklahoma is fortunate to have a robust population in the Cross Timbers region. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will assure that biologists and foresters will continue efforts to conserve and improve oak woodland habitat on state and private land---benefiting painted bunting and a variety of other species in southern Oklahoma.

**Golden-winged Warbler (West Virginia):** Golden-winged warblers have lost as much as 98% of their population in the Appalachian Mountains region since the mid 1960’s. Recovering golden-winged warblers requires restoring young forest habitat— an ongoing activity which supports jobs in the forestry industry and provides additional hunting opportunities by benefiting white-tailed deer, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and other important game species.

**Lewis’s Woodpecker (Oregon):** This fly-catching woodpecker nests in large snags (standing dead trees) within forests burned by wildfires, in open ponderosas, oaks, oak-pines, and cottonwood riparian woods. But they are declining and even disappearing from former homes. They depend on aerial insects to eat and large snags for nest homes. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will fund investigations of habitat relationships, and actions to maintain or restore forests, along with post-fire ponderosa pine habitat, as well as adding nest boxes to enhance habitat.

**Black Skimmer (Maryland)**: Black skimmers fly just above the water skimming their lower bill below the surface, ready to snap up fish. Maryland’s black skimmers have declined by more than 90% in the past 20 years. Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will provide crucial funds to rebuild and replenish nesting islands for skimmers, terns, piping plovers and other coastal birds

**Roseate Tern (Massachusetts):** Roughly half of North America’s population of roseate terns breeds in the Bay State. Federally listed as an endangered species in the Northeast, roseate tern populations are in decline from habitat loss, competition with gulls, and possible threats on their wintering grounds. Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will provide critical funds to protect nesting colonies of these birds on Massachusetts’ islands.

**Burrowing Owl (Florida):** Florida’s burrowing owls have declined with the loss of prairie habitat, and they are now adapting to altered landscapes like golf courses, vacant lots, and airports. With help from Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, Florida Wildlife Commission and partners can restore healthy burrowing owl populations by encouraging communities to install artificial or starter burrows, reduce the use of pesticides, install perches near burrows to lessen human disturbance, and maintain open habitat around burrows.

**Red Knot (New Jersey):** Migrating a stunning 9,000 miles from southern Argentina to the Arctic, the red knot has declined dramatically over the past few decades. New Jersey’s Delaware Bayshore is a stopover of Hemispheric significance for red knots and several other shorebird species. The mid-May arrival coincides with the spawning of horseshoe crabs—one of the most dramatic natural phenomena in the world. Funding from Recovering America’s Wildlife Act is critical for research and habitat restoration along New Jersey’s Bayshore beaches, where erosion from historic salt marsh alterations and sea level rise have severely degraded horseshoe crab spawning.

**Pinyon Jay (New Mexico):** The pinyon jay is the primary, long-distance disperser of piñon-pine seeds. It is also one of the fastest declining bird species in piñon-juniper habitats due to habitat loss, human disturbance, and climate change. Funding from Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will support crucial research to document home ranges and nesting colonies to then ensure this bird remains part of America’s natural heritage.

**Whooping Crane (Louisiana):** The tallest and one of the rarest birds in North America, the whooping crane, is showing promising recovery thanks to efforts on many fronts, from conserving wetland habitats to reintroduction. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fish and partners reintroduced 10 juvenile cranes at White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area in 2011 and continue to release birds. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will assure the cranes there become a self-sustaining population—one key to this magnificent bird gliding off the Endangered Species list.

**Meadowlark (North Dakota):** Far fewer meadowlarks serenade from the prairies today than a half century ago, threatened by loss of grassland habitat, early mowing of fields, overgrazing, and pesticides. North Dakota Game and Fish has an innovative strategy to recover meadowlarks-- tapping into the collective insights, resources and efforts of conservation, agriculture, and industry partners to enhance, restore and sustain native grasslands in North Dakota. The [Meadowlark Initiative](https://gf.nd.gov/meadowlark-initiative) offers a win-win solution—especially with much needed funding from the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act.

**8. Benefits to Birders from the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act**

1. **Every bird counts**: Birds will receive focused conservation attention in every state and on tribal lands—from Swainson’s hawks in California to bobolinks in Illinois and scarlet tanagers in New York.
2. **Connect people with birds:** As birdwatching popularity soars, states and tribes will have much needed funds to create, expand, and maintain birding recreation and education sites and programs—from nature trails and wildlife viewing platforms to eagle watch days and teaching beginning birdwatching. The Act will help nurture the next generation of birders.
3. **Community science**: Expect more community science and volunteer opportunities to directly participate in wildlife conservation and enjoy the rewards of making a difference for birds at home or in the field.
4. **Invest in state wildlife conservation:** When everyone contributes to funding for state fish and wildlife agencies, everyone benefits from the resulting conservation of thousands of species and significant habitats -- and the numerous recreational ways, including birding, to enjoy the outdoors.
5. **Invest in tribal nations wildlife conservation:** Funding tribal nations wildlife conservation programs will recognize and provide consistent funding for innovative conservation programs for birds that are taking flight, like the [Yurok Condor Restoration Program](https://www.yuroktribe.org/yurok-condor-restoration-program) in northern California.

**9. More Resources**

* **Blogs and Fact Sheets to share with your urgent message that the time is NOW to pass the legislation:**
  + [The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Policy/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act) home page
  + [One Bill Can Help Our Nation’s Winged Wonders.](https://blog.nwf.org/2019/09/birds-in-crisis-how-one-bill-can-help-our-nations-winged-wonders/)
  + [7 Reasons to Support the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://blog.nwf.org/2021/04/7-reasons-to-support-the-recovering-americas-wildlife-act/)
  + [Fact Sheet: The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/Documents/PDFs/Wildlife-Conservation/Fast-Facts-Wildlife-Crisis_10192017.ashx)
  + [Reintroducing Wildlife: Five Species for Hope](https://blog.nwf.org/2022/01/reintroducing-wildlife-5-species-for-hope-2/)
  + <https://blog.nwf.org/2022/04/an-urgent-message-for-all-people-who-love-birds/>
* **Bird Decline examples to add to any content if you wish:**
  + - The eastern meadowlark has declined by as much as 77% across the United States and Canada since 1970.
* Chimney swift populations declined in the United States by 53% from 1966 to 2007.
* The number of wood thrush that breed in the United States has decreased more than 60% over the last 50 years due to loss of breeding habitat in North America.
* The Bachman’s sparrow is now absent over most of its northern range and uncommon in most of the south.
* The cerulean warbler declined 75% between 1996 and 2012.
* The golden-winged warbler has declined 64% over the last 40 years.

**Quotes from Birders in support of Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (please add!)**

“Birds are brilliant. They are the enchanting soundtracks to our daily lives, providing immeasurable benefits to our emotional well-being, and the health of the ecosystems on which our physical well-being depends. I hope that you will be part of a community of people taking steps to help birds thrive in a changing world by encouraging congressional support for the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act.”

* Corina Newsome, ornithologist and birder

We have an obligation to care for the planet, because the natural world is our world, there is no distinction. Keeping birds common and healthy is not a luxury; a healthier environment with room for birds keeps us healthy as well, and having birds around greatly improves our quality of life. Recovering America’s Wildlife Act is a win-win that benefits all living things in the United States.

* David Sibley, author and illustrator of the Sibley Guides

A larger overall toolkit with additional resources is available: <https://affiliates.nwf.org/resources/recovering-toolkit/>

For more information contact:

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