



The State of the Birds 2010 Report on Climate Change is our nation's first comprehensive assessment of the vulnerability of nearly 800 bird species to climate change. The report shows that climate change will have an increasingly disruptive effect on bird species in all habitats.

Scientists scored each of more than 800 bird species based on six factors indicating sensitivity to climate change, such as migratory behaviors, dependence on specific habitats, ability to disperse, degree of specialization on limited resources, reproductive potential, and habitat-related exposure. Species were categorized as showing High Vulnerability (vulnerable on four or more attributes), Medium Vulnerability (vulnerable on two or three attributes), or Low Vulnerability (vulnerable on fewer than two attributes).

The analysis indicates which birds are most vulnerable and in need of conservation attention. By addressing climate change and following the actions outlined in the State of the Birds 2010 Report on Climate Change, together organizations, agencies, and individuals can help ensure that future generation will enjoy the birds we are working to protect today.

Key Messages

Key findings from the "State of the Birds" climate change report include:

Birds in every terrestrial and aquatic habitat will be affected by climate change, although individual species in each habitat will likely respond differently. Some bird species will adapt and succeed, others will struggle and some will disappear.

Oceanic birds are among the most vulnerable species because they don't raise many young each year; they face challenges from a rapidly changing marine ecosystem; and they nest on islands that may be flooded as sea levels rise. All 67 oceanic bird species, including petrels and albatrosses, are among the most vulnerable birds in the United States to climate change.

Hawaiian birds, including endangered species such as Puaiohi and 'Akiapōlā'au already face multiple threats and are increasingly challenged by mosquito-borne diseases and invasive species as climate change alters their native habitats.

Birds in coastal, arctic/alpine, and grassland habitats, as well as those on Caribbean and other Pacific Islands show intermediate levels of vulnerability; most birds in aridlands, wetlands, and forests show relatively low vulnerability to climate change.

For bird species that are already of conservation concern such as the Golden-cheeked Warbler, Whooping Crane, and Spectacled Eider, the added vulnerability to climate change may hasten declines or prevent recovery.

The report identified common bird species such as the American Oystercatcher, Common Nighthawk, and Northern Pintail that are likely to become species of conservation concern as a result of climate change.

The report also offers solutions that illustrate how, by working together, organizations and individuals can have a demonstrable positive impact on birds in the U.S. Specifically, the report indicates that the way lands are managed can mitigate climate change and help birds adapt to changing conditions.

Conservation Actions

This 2010 report outlines conservation actions that will be important as biological planning and design of large-scale conservation efforts are advanced. The Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, Land Conservation Cooperatives, and public/private partnerships for the conservation of birds, and the actions outlined in every State's State Wildlife Action Plan will be important tools as we tackle the additional threats climate change will place on the birds of our nation. When conservationists can detect problems early enough, they can prevent extinction.

Background

Secretary Salazar released the first State of the Birds Report for the United States in March 2009. The report was created through an unprecedented partnership via a subcommittee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. Birds such as Northern Bobwhite and Marbled Murrelet suffer from habitat loss, shifting migration patterns due to climate change, and other environmental stresses. More than 75% of birds that nest only in deserts, shrub-scrub, and chaparral are declining, primarily because of rampant and poorly planned urban growth.

The report highlighted examples in which habitat restoration and conservation have reversed previous declines, offering hope that it is not too late to take action to save declining bird populations. The report highlighted that birds can be indicators of the health of our environment and calls attention to the collective efforts needed to ensure healthy populations of birds and a healthy environment for people.



Laysan Albatross chick by Brad Bortner

The first and second U.S. State of the Birds reports were produced by an unprecedented partnership among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), state fish and wildlife agencies, and bird conservation organizations through a working group of the U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). The partnership includes American Bird Conservancy, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon Society, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, North American Bird Conservation Initiative, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, and U.S. Geological Survey. The working group of the U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative remains strong and committed to working together on future reports.