



North American Pollinator Protection Campaign

WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

SONGBIRDS



The North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC) is a tri-national collaboration of diverse partners working to protect pollinators and raise the profile of pollinator issues.

The mission of the NAPPC is to encourage and support actions to benefit the health of pollinating species in North America.

**North American Pollinator
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For more information about how to help pollinators or to make a tax-deductible contribution for pollinator protection, please contact us at: www.NAPPC.org or www.coevolution.org.

*NAPPC is coordinated by the
Coevolution Institute.*

Many North American songbirds, including those which migrate seasonally between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, enjoy a diverse diet of berries, fruits, and seeds from plants that depend on animal pollinators for successful reproduction. Pollinators themselves also provide an important source of protein, especially for growing fledglings that require the added fats and proteins contained in caterpillars, larvae, butterflies, moths, flies, and beetles.



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Wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), although dull in color, are one of our most melodious songsters. They live in deciduous forests near water. Wood thrushes depend on beetles, ants, caterpillars, fruits and berries for subsistence. Their bottomland breeding habitats range from Florida to Canada, and

over-wintering occurs in broad-leaved forests from southern Mexico to western Panama. Both habitats have been fragmented, reducing reproductive success and increasing this species' susceptibility to brood parasites.

Formerly one of the most abundant warblers, the **Cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*)** has suffered one of the steepest population declines as a result of habitat loss in its breeding grounds in the northeastern and central U.S., as well as on the slopes of the Andes mountains in northern South America.

The Cerulean warbler forages in the canopies of mature deciduous forests, eating insects and butterfly larvae in the summer and some plant materials in the winter.



Mo.Dept.Conservation



The Yellow-billed Cuckoo

The **Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)** is currently a candidate for listing as a U.S. Federal Endangered Species. An egg predator that also forages on amphibians, the cuckoo relies heavily on insects, including butterflies, beetles, and caterpillars as well as fruits such as grapes and various berries, with a preference for mulberries. Yellow-billed cuckoos are especially fond of tent caterpillars and gypsy moth larvae.

Coincidentally, the Pawpaw tree (*Asimina triloba*), illustrated in this painting, is believed to be pollinated by flies and beetles. The Pawpaw is North America's largest edible fruit, and is the only temperate



How You Can Help Pollinators:

- ❖ Cultivate pollen and nectar producing plants, especially native plants that bloom from early spring into late fall, and plant them in clusters.
- ❖ Reduce or eliminate pesticides whenever possible.
- ❖ Include larval host plants in your landscape so that pollinators can lay their eggs.
- ❖ Add to nectar resources with a hummingbird feeder.
- ❖ Seek more information, and support local, national, and international efforts to promote pollinators and native plant communities.
- ❖ Be sure habitat for local and migratory pollinators is part of your local and regional planning. Inform public officials that pollinators matter to you.
- ❖ Learn more about pollinators. Get a guidebook and learn to recognize the pollinators in your neighborhood.

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member of the Custard Apple family (Annonaceae), which contains many delicious Central and South American fruits such as guanabana, cherimoya, sugar apple, and atemoya, all of which are beetle-pollinated.



Eastern bluebirds (*Sialis sialis*) have declined significantly in recent years, due in part to the harmful effects of pesticides, as well as habitat loss and competition from other species. Seventy percent of the Eastern bluebird diet is comprised of invertebrates, which may include pollinators such as beetles and caterpillars. During the colder months when insects are scarce, Eastern bluebirds rely on the fruits of wild plants such as blackberries, honeysuckle, pokeberries, holly, sumac, chinaberries and high-fat fruits such as dogwood – all plants that depend on pollinators for successful fruit production.

The **Kentucky warbler (*Oporornis formosus*)** is a ground-dwelling songbird. It relies on insects and caterpillars present in deciduous forests of the southeastern United States during the summer, and winters in from Mexico south through Central America to Panama. In its Neotropical habitat, the Kentucky warbler is known to feed on *Cecropia* fruits, which are pollinated by a variety of animals including ants, moths, and birds.



Songbirds have faced alarming population declines in recent years due to a variety of factors including habitat destruction, misuse of pesticides, and loss of valuable food resources. Animal pollinators help to sustain these fragile populations by supplying them with adult and larval insects full of nutritious proteins and fats. Pollinators also provide an essential reproductive service to the plants on which songbirds forage, allowing those plants to produce seeds, nuts, fruits, and berries for songbirds and other wildlife.

We can help to reverse the negative trend in songbird populations by helping to protect and increase the number of pollinators that help to feed them. Protecting pollinators and the services they provide to the food web is an important step towards ensuring not only the future of songbirds across the globe, but our own future as well.

References:

Audubon Society; Birdlink.com; Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology; Pollinator.com; Princeton University; University of Michigan Museum of Zoology.