



2012

ANNUAL REPORT

American Bird Conservancy



Board Chair Warren Cooke.
Photo: Cathy Cooke



ABC President George Fenwick.
Photo: Gavin Shire

Message *from the* Chairman *and* President

Thank you for supporting your American Bird Conservancy and its mission of conserving the native birds of the Americas. Thanks to you, during the past year ABC has achieved heartening successes across the conservation spectrum, from creating reserves that protect the rarest bird species to reducing threats that affect all bird species. Your generosity and support allow ABC to keep its eye on birds!

Members of the ABC family are familiar with our strategic conservation framework (see right), which calls for safeguarding the rarest birds, conserving habitats, and eliminating threats — all based on

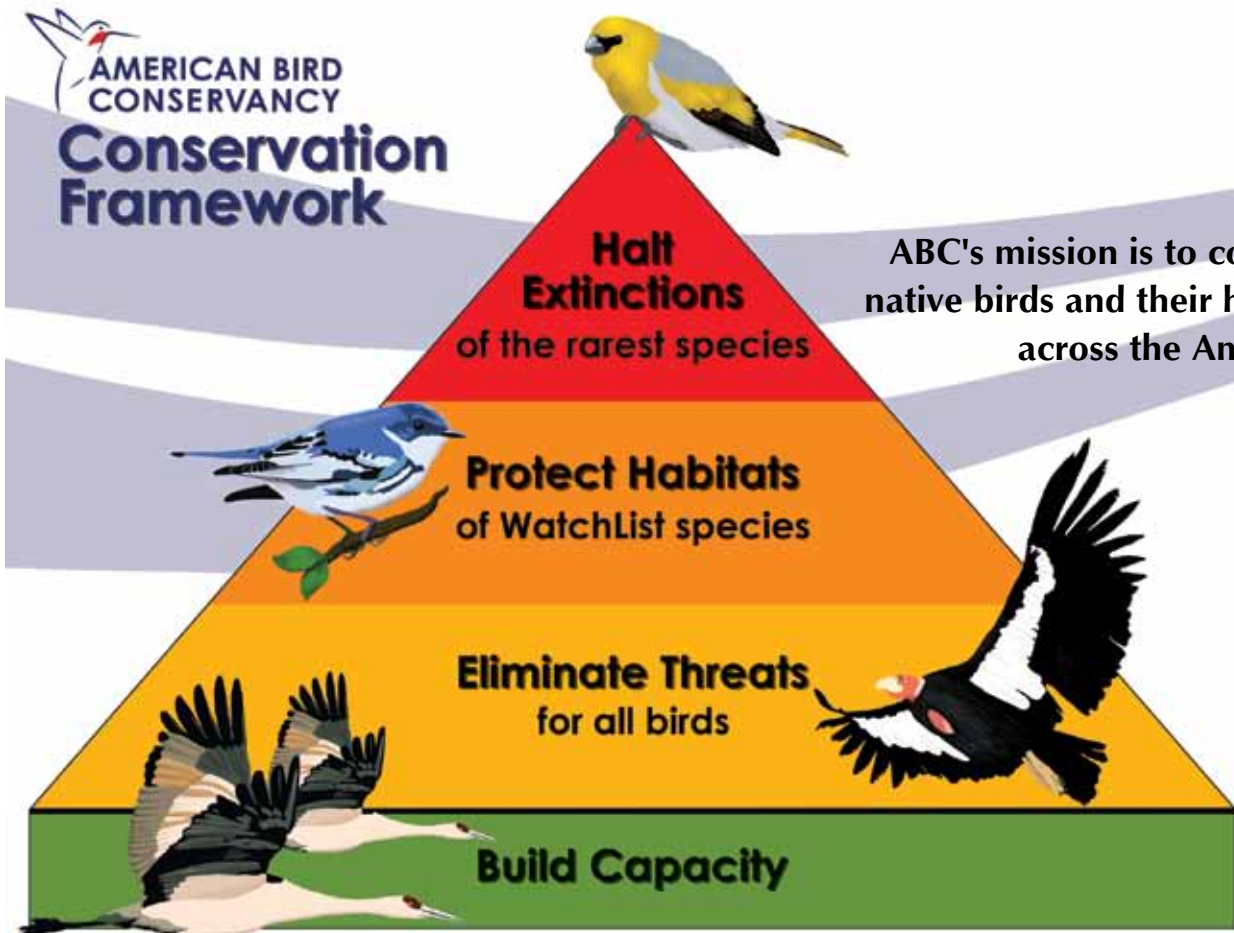
the best science and working through effective partnerships. Beyond this framework, ABC is dedicated to addressing the breadth of conservation opportunities and the full depth of conservation issues. Here is what we mean:

Your ABC possesses an encyclopedic breadth of knowledge about bird species at greatest risk; the conditions and needs of their habitats across their life cycles; and the relative significance of dozens of their greatest threats. We manage this information by prioritizing. The rarest species are attended to as a top priority; habitats are targeted for protection or recovery based on their importance to birds; and the threats



Red Knots. Photo: David Speiser,
www.lilibirds.com

COVER: Greater Prairie-Chicken.
Photo: Greg Lavaty, texastargetbirds.com



AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY
Conservation Framework

ABC's mission is to conserve native birds and their habitats across the Americas.

Halt Extinctions
of the rarest species

Protect Habitats
of WatchList species

Eliminate Threats
for all birds

Build Capacity

to birds are addressed in order of the degree of their impact on bird numbers. As a result, ABC is creating reserves for more rare bird species and undertaking programs to reduce more threats to birds than any other organization.

That illustrates ABC's breadth, but what do we mean by depth? Depth means doing the whole job and doing it right. ABC does not measure success merely by launching programs, but by following through to accomplish their objectives. At ABC, media attention is not our measure of success; instead, more birds, better habitats, and reduced mortality are.

Depth means "stick-to-itiveness," illustrated by our work with Colombian partner Fundación ProAves to ensure the long-term sustainability of the El Dorado Bird Reserve. ABC and other conservation groups teamed up in 2005 to purchase 1,700 acres of land that now form the core of El Dorado. We know it is not enough to just buy land; we have to be sure that reserves such as El Dorado

can survive long into the future, or our goal of preventing the extinction of species such as the Santa Marta Parakeet will not be realized.

We are pleased to report that in 2012, El Dorado took in more money than it spent, becoming the first economically sustainable private Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) reserve in the Americas. Ours is the work of years and sometimes decades.

We are making progress on all fronts. Thank you again for the critical part you play in this success. We do it for birds, but we do it thanks to you!

Warren Cooke
Chairman, ABC

George Fenwick
President, ABC

HALTING EXTINCTIONS

First, prevent extinctions. That has always been a prime directive here at ABC, where we've gone to great lengths to safeguard endangered and critically endangered birds throughout the Americas. We have protected habitat and helped set up reserves that harbor more than 2,000 bird species. Many of these birds, including Colombia's Yellow-eared Parrot, Brazil's Lear's Macaw, and Ecuador's Pale-headed Brush-Finch, were facing a bleak future before ABC became involved. Since ABC and our partners set out to protect these species, they have rebounded, and their conservation status has improved along with that of many other species found in our reserves. ABC is a co-founder of the Alliance for Zero Extinction, which now includes 90 conservation groups in 36 countries working to halt the decline and extinction of the world's species.

Saving the Esmeraldas Woodstar

Last year, ABC helped pull one of world's smallest and rarest birds back from the brink of extinction. The Esmeraldas Woodstar, at 2½ inches, is barely bigger than a bumblebee. Its feathers are a striking mix of green, white, and copper, with a patch of iridescent purple on the throats of the males. It can zip around like other hummingbirds but often seems to fly in slow motion, wagging its tail back and forth while floating toward the flowers that sustain it.

The Esmeraldas Woodstar is only found in Ecuador, where it seems to nest almost exclusively in moist lowland forest fragments found near a small number of rivers. Experts say it's likely that these birds were much more common 50 to 100 years ago, when lowland forests covered most of coastal Ecuador. Now, however, 95 percent of Ecuador's coastal forests have been cleared by farmers, settlers, resort builders, and loggers.

Rediscovery of a Lost Species

For a time, conservationists thought the loss of all these forests had wiped out the Esmeraldas Woodstar. But the species was rediscovered in the early 1990s, when a pair of ornithologists saw several individuals in various locations. At the time, nobody knew what these birds ate or where they built their tiny nests. Nobody knew whether they flew into the Andes in the winter like some other hummingbirds do. In other words, nobody knew which landscapes were essential to this hummingbird's survival.

About five years ago, ABC helped fund a new search for the woodstar's breeding grounds. Six months into the search, Bert Harris, Mery Juiña, Bertram Hickman, and Ana Agreda started finding tiny nests made out of lichen twigs and bits of spider web. Esmeraldas Woodstars had built them in low bushes at the edges of the forests near the place where the Ayampe River enters the Pacific Ocean, 70 miles northwest of the city of Guayaquil.

Ecuador's remaining coastal forests are home to one of the rarest birds on earth.

Then as now, it was believed that these were the main breeding grounds for one of the rarest birds on earth. Then as now, the nest sites were on land owned communally by people living near the town of Las Tunas. Most of them were leery of outsiders bearing offers to buy into one of the last coastal forests left in Ecuador. Over the years, they had been approached by loggers, farmers, government agencies, resort builders, and others: the few deals they had agreed to had produced no lasting benefits.

But in 2010, a new set of visitors approached the leaders of Las Tunas — representatives of Fundación Jocotoco, an Ecuadorian partner of ABC. Jocotoco operates ten bird reserves around Ecuador, reserves that were made possible in part with funds from ABC. Representatives from Jocotoco told the communal forest owners that they wanted to create another reserve, near the mouth of the Ayampe. It would save the breeding grounds of the tiny hummingbird the locals knew as "Estrellita" (little star).

The communal forest owners and the local conservationists talked for months about the plan to create a reserve. Then Jocotoco arranged a bus tour of the reserves they operate in Ecuador. That bus trip helped convince the local leaders that a forest preservation deal could have long-lasting benefits.

A Deal with Local Communities

In 2012, the leaders of Las Tunas and the representatives of Jocotoco finalized a deal to save the Estrellita's breeding grounds and ensure that the local communities would benefit. In the months that followed, a reforestation effort and trash collection program were launched. Other sections of the forest were later protected by new

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“It’s hard to overestimate the importance of a partner like ABC. Together, we have conserved important habitats throughout Ecuador; created local, national, and international interest in our work; and contributed to the National Plan for Good Living adopted by the Ecuadorian Government.”

— Rocío Merino
Executive Director, Fundación Jocotoco

Machalilla National Park on the west coast of Ecuador, part of the very limited range of the Esmeraldas Woodstar. Photo: Bert Harris

Esmeraldas Woodstar. Photo: Murray Cooper





ABC staff and partners visit the Ayampe Reserve, where we have helped establish a project site to conserve the Esmeraldas Woodstar. From left to right: John Guarnaccia, Rocío Merino, Ivan Samuels, Byron Delgado, Martin Schaefer, Francisco Sornoza, Juan Carlos Crespo, and ABC's Sara Lara. Photo: Paola Villalba, March 14, 2013.

Halting Extinctions: MILESTONES

HAWAII: Completed the second phase of a high-profile effort to save one of the country's rarest birds from extinction by capturing 26 critically endangered Millerbirds on Nihoa Island and moving them to the northwestern Hawaiian island of Laysan, some 650 miles away. There they joined a thriving group of "founder" Millerbirds moved from Nihoa in 2011, as part of an historic attempt to protect the species by establishing a second population.

CHILE: Began restoring native flora on Isla Santa Clara in the Juan Fernández

archipelago as part of a long-term effort to protect the isolated breeding grounds of the Pink-footed Shearwater, a globally vulnerable migratory seabird that spends the nonbreeding season off the coasts of Mexico, the United States, and Canada.

COLOMBIA: Helped create an Alliance for Zero Extinction sanctuary that protects the last remaining rainforest habitat of one of the most dangerous animals on earth — the endangered golden poison frog — as well as endangered birds including the Baudó Guan, the vulnerable Brown Wood-Rail, and Great Curassow.



Pink-footed Shearwater. Photo: Greg Lavaty, textargetbirds.com

conservation deals. Nature trails are being developed, local guides are being trained, and plans to build a nature lodge are under discussion.

Not surprisingly, surveys of the new reserve have made it clear that other rare birds will be protected by the conservation agreements. These include endangered birds such as the Grey-backed Hawk, Blackish-headed Spinetail, and Slaty Becard. This region is also known for its rare endemic plants and butterflies.

There is much more work that must be done to save the Esmeraldas Woodstar, but last year, we took a giant step in that direction by forming key partnerships, securing crucial funding, and helping our partner group preserve key lands.

We've been doing work like this all over the Americas for years now. It's the kind of work that we are known for. And it's the work that we do best.

Ayampe landscape.
Photo: Benjamin Skolnik, ABC

Meet ABC Staff

Benjamin Skolnik, International Conservation Officer

Life Before ABC:

Peace Corps volunteer in Musho, Peru, a village on the side of the tallest tropical mountain in the world.



Photo: Luis Rubello, 2012

Favorite Bird: Lava Gulls on the Galapagos Islands. Stunning red eye rings.

Most Amazing Birding Experience: Watching a Banded Ground-Cuckoo leaning down off of a log to grab insects fleeing an ant swarm in the forests of Ecuador.

Hobbies: Triathlon, two daughters.

Favorite Landscape: High Andean mountains covered with grasslands and elfin *Polylepis* paperbark forests.

Favorite Sound: White-throated Sparrows in the morning.

If You Could Do One Thing for Birds: Build a network of "habitat highways" reconnecting forest fragments in the Americas.

PROTECTING HABITATS

Saving wild birds means saving their wild homelands, and — when possible — expanding them. ABC works across the hemisphere to do this. In Latin America, 850,000 acres of bird habitat are now being managed for wildlife conservation in various ways, including as reserves and conservation easements. In North America, ABC is working to protect and restore 11 of the most threatened habitats, ranging from the longleaf pines that harbor birds such as the Northern Bobwhite and Red-cockaded Woodpecker, to the shortgrass prairies used by birds including the Long-billed Curlew and Swainson's Hawk. In the west, we are preserving the oak savannah used by the Western Bluebird; in Hawai'i, we are protecting a wide range of habitats, including the forests that are the last home of the critically endangered Palila. Finally, in the Appalachian Mountains, ABC has helped launch an ambitious effort to rebuild lost habitat required by the threatened Golden-winged Warbler.

Shaping Young Forests for Birds

In Pennsylvania, ABC has helped transform a migratory bird that was a symbol of decline into a symbol of recovery. That species is the Golden-winged Warbler, which breeds in young forest habitats in the Great Lakes and Appalachian regions. It is a gray-backed bird identified by the black markings on its face and neck and the bright yellow patches on its crown and wings.

As with many other migratory songbirds, Golden-wing counts have been declining sharply since at least the

1960s. At that time, the young forest openings this warbler breeds in were much more common than they are today, thanks to natural wetlands later drained, dam-building beavers now less prevalent, forest fires no longer allowed to burn themselves out, and small farms long since abandoned.

In the Appalachians, those kinds of changes turned the warbler's breeding range into landscapes dominated by older, even-aged, closed-canopy forests. By all accounts, this change has made it harder for Golden-wings flying north to find the younger forests that they require for nesting.

Turning Back the Environmental Clock

We believe that this decline has now begun to turn around. This potentially momentous change dates back to 2008, when a task force that included ABC endorsed a plan to make it easier for Golden-wings to breed. The Golden-winged Warbler Working Group plans to

Golden-winged Warbler habitat at Sproul State Forest, Pennsylvania, about 18 years post-wildfire. Photo: Jeff Larkin





accomplish this by vastly increasing the amount of young forest habitat found in the warbler's breeding range. In a sense, the group hopes to replicate the work once done by all those beavers, fires, and farmers.

Jeff Larkin, a wildlife ecologist at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a member of the working group, says this project is much more than an attempt to help breeding Golden-wings find nest sites. It is also an effort to restore ecological complexity to forests that have lost it.

Chain saws, brush hogs, and prescribed fires are now being used to help create the young forest habitat. But Larkin wants to make it clear that the result will never be a bunch of clear-cut squares. It took Larkin and his colleagues years to figure out what the Golden-wings require in these places. That's why the new, young forest habitat will take odd shapes with lots of different edges, why some of the older trees will be left standing, and why the broad swaths of land next to the older forests will feature a specific mix of shrubs, saplings, and patches of herbaceous plants such as grasses and goldenrod.

Larkin, whose work is funded in part by ABC, says he's well aware that programs this ambitious sometimes sputter after liftoff. Funding can be hard to find, and key landowners can decline to get involved. Then there

are the problems faced by overworked and underfunded managers at state and federal government agencies, who may struggle to find the resources to prioritize these kinds of plans.

Collectively, these problems form what Larkin calls "the implementation gap." He says it's the reason many fine bird conservation plans end up on shelves in dusty storage rooms.

But not this time. This time, at least so far, the people attempting to create more warbler habitat have found ways to bridge the implementation gap. In Pennsylvania, work on public lands has been pushed forward by the

"I have watched ABC carefully for a long time, and I am convinced that it is the place where those interested in the protection of birds get the most value for their dollar. The best part is that the sterling reputation derives from real achievement in bird conservation that cannot be diminished or discounted by any honest observer."

— Pierre Howard, President,
The Georgia Conservancy



Research technicians band a male Golden-winged Warbler captured in a habitat treatment site in north-central Pennsylvania. Left to right: Sean McGaughran, Mathew Ferrence, Joe Grata, and Jeff Larkin: Photo: Keith Boyer, IUP, 2011



Many declining bird species, such as this Whip-poor-will, benefit from habitat programs designed to help Golden-winged Warblers. Photo: @ Wil Hershberger, Nature Images and Sounds, LLC

Pennsylvania Game Commission and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources — Bureau of Forestry. Meantime, work on Pennsylvania’s private lands has been encouraged by grants provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. As a result, in 2012 alone, 3,600 acres of young forest habitat were created on private lands in key warbler conservation zones in Pennsylvania.

This work has many beneficiaries. Hunters like the fact that young forest habitats attract game animals such as the American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, and snowshoe hare. Here at ABC, we like the fact that a wide range of migratory songbirds rely on young forests. In addition to the Golden-winged Warbler, these openings draw the Chestnut-sided Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Yellow-breasted Chat, Prairie Warbler, Black- and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and Whip-poor-will.

Protecting Habitats: MILESTONES

NORTHEASTERN MEXICO: Completed restoration work in Laguna Madre on islands, wetlands, and freshwater lagoons used by Redheads, Reddish Egret, and Wilson’s and Snowy Plovers. Removed non-native predators that threaten migratory bird survival. Secured conservation easements for protection of 12,000 acres of adjoining private lands.

CENTRAL UNITED STATES: Through ABC’s lead role in the Central Hardwoods Joint Venture, helped launch a ten-year, \$20 million effort to restore nearly 500,000 acres of pine and oak woodlands in the Mark Twain National Forest in Missouri and the Ozark-St. Francis and Ouachita

National Forests in Arkansas, using funds provided by the USDA Forest Service. This multi-year project will create high-quality habitat for priority species such as the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Bachman’s Sparrow, and Prairie Warbler.

NORTHWESTERN MEXICO: Developed agreements with local ranchers to manage 23,000 acres of Chihuahuan Desert grasslands for both cattle and birds, including the Baird’s Sparrow, Chestnut-collared Longspur, and the threatened Sprague’s Pipit. Worked with local partners and government officials to improve water management across the entire state of Chihuahua.



Snowy Plover. Photo: Greg Lavaty, texasatbird.com

Meet ABC Staff

Andrew W. Rothman, Migratory Bird Program Director

Life Before ABC: Executive Director of the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center in Chilamate, Costa Rica.

Favorite Bird: I have an affinity for birds I have worked with: Great Green Macaw, Golden-winged Warbler, Bay-breasted Cuckoo.

Most Amazing Birding Experience: Riding a four-wheeler at dusk in the northern lowlands of Costa Rica, when a bright white Barn Owl started flying alongside me at eye level and stayed there for a good 200 yards. Amazingly cool.

Favorite Sound: Common Loon in the north woods of Wisconsin.

Favorite Landscape: How can one choose between misty mornings in lowland rainforest full of howler monkeys and macaws, and the top of a frosty ragged mountain overlooking green valleys lined with whitewater rivers? The world is too beautiful for favorites.

If You Could Do One Thing for Birds: Teach people to consider birds in every decision.



Photo: Holly Robertson, 2010

Replicating a Good Idea

Andrew Rothman, Director of ABC's Migratory Bird Program and a member of the Golden-winged Warbler Working Group, says the group believes it is possible to stabilize the Golden-winged Warbler population in ten years. After that, he says the goal is to increase the warbler count by 50 percent over the next 30 to 50 years. If that is to happen, programs similar to the one that is now up and running in Pennsylvania must spread to other states in the warbler's breeding range: Tennessee, North Carolina, West Virginia, New York, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan. At the moment, several of these states are either looking over plans to replicate what's being done in Pennsylvania or launching restoration projects of their own.

We should add some caveats to this good news. There remains an urgent need to map and save the Golden-winged Warbler's wintering grounds in Latin America. Also, budget cuts or economic troubles could throw a monkey wrench into this program.

But brief asides like those should not be used to taint the fine work now being done in Pennsylvania, or the fact that in this corner of the warbler's range, a decline that once seemed irreversible is now turning around.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Photo: Robert Royse

ELIMINATING THREATS

The list of man-made threats to birds in the Americas is a long one: outdoor cats, deforestation, fragments of lead ammunition left in carcasses by hunters, rat poisons, pesticides, badly sited wind turbines, poorly lit buildings, record-setting oil spills, floating plastic trash, fishing vessels with long lines of hooks, islands infested with invasive rats, Burmese pythons spreading through the Florida Everglades, and global climate change...

Problems like those contribute to the death of billions of birds in the Western Hemisphere each year; were it not for ABC they might be killing billions more. Over the years, we have done a lot to draw attention to these problems, and just as much to put solutions into place. Sometimes that means wading into problems that appeared to be unsolvable not long ago.

Cedar Waxwing. Photo: Tom Grey



Promoting Bird-Friendly Buildings

People who think bird-friendly buildings are ugly need to take a look at the Manhattan headquarters of the IAC internet company, a fritted-glass masterpiece designed by Frank Gehry. After that, the cynics should check out the other-worldly Aqua Tower in Chicago, where undulating balconies roll across the outer walls like waves. Sacramento's Bateson Building uses brilliant yellow outdoor shades to keep the birds away. In Suitland, Maryland, the U.S. Census Building uses an outer screen made up of long, wavy, laminated panels of white oak.

These are just a few of the buildings featured in *Bird-Friendly Building Design*, an aptly titled and important book published by ABC last year. If we could, we'd put a copy of this book in every mailbox in the country, as part of an effort to feed rising public interest in a problem that's become one of the biggest man-made threats to birds.

Lethal Impacts of Glass

Chances are you've heard the sickening thud of a bird that has flown headfirst into a pane of glass. Maybe you have seen the ghostly imprints that their heads and feathers leave at the point of impact. Many of those birds die instantly. Others, dazed or injured, become easy prey for outdoor cats and other predators.

No one knows exactly what birds see when they look at the world. What we do know, sadly, is that birds do not see the glass windows and glass walls found in nearly all homes and buildings. For that reason, in the United States alone, as many as a billion birds a year are killed when they collide with glass. Studies of the carnage have established that individuals of at least one-third of the bird species found in the United States have been killed in this way, with 258 species recorded. The list includes hummingbirds, woodpeckers, kingfishers, woodcock, a wide range of songbirds, and many birds of prey.

Skyscrapers with mirrored glass exteriors are the most notorious killers, but small buildings and family homes are lethal too. According to one study, the windows in the "average" home kill as many as six birds every year.

Not too long ago, it was extremely difficult to draw attention to this problem. Architects and builders tended to ignore it, as did state and city planners. Companies that manufactured glass did not think there was a market



Chicago's Aqua Tower, designed by Studio Gang Architects, minimizes the use of reflective glass, making the 859-foot tower an excellent example of design that is both bird-safe and attractive. Photo: Tim Bloomquist

for windows that were visible to birds, so they did not invest in bird-friendly glass research. Even the U.S. Green Building Council was initially unable to set standards for bird-friendliness, mostly because nobody had done the research needed to show which standards would work.

"I put ABC BirdTape on my windows last fall and have not had a single bird strike since! Prior to that, I had to close curtains and shut blinds to prevent strikes. Thank you."

—Susan Oseth, ABC supporter



American Woodcock. Photo: Steve Gifford

Research to Prevent Collisions

That is where ABC comes in — the only national conservation group with a bird/glass collision program. Since 2009, we have been conducting crucial bird research at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History’s Powdermill Avian Research Center near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. There, in a long, dark, rotating facility known as “the tunnel,” we test the reaction of free-flying birds to a wide range of potentially bird-friendly

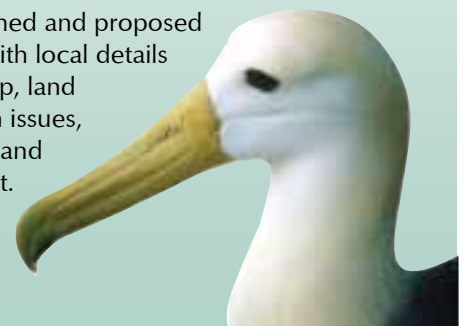
glass panes. The tests begin when a bird netted nearby is released into the front end of the tunnel; at the other end, two different kinds of glass are mounted side by side in the light, creating what appears to be an exit. One of the panes is made of glass that birds do not see. The other is made of glass that is potentially visible to birds. As the bird flies down the tunnel toward the light, we record its reaction to the “friendly” pane of glass.

Eliminating Threats: MILESTONES

UNITED STATES: Pushed for a near-total ban on popular d-CON rat poisons that harm children, pets, and federally protected raptors including hawks, owls, and eagles. In January 2013, the Environmental Protection Agency announced its intention to severely restrict the use of these poisons.

ECUADOR: Helped develop inexpensive technologies that reduce accidental seabird bycatch by longline fishing boats in the Ecuadorian hake fleet. The new devices help reduce the time it takes to deploy long lines that carry hundreds of hooks, greatly reducing the threat to birds attracted to the bait, such as the critically endangered Waved Albatross.

UNITED STATES: Developed and released an online, interactive map that identifies more than 2,000 locations where birds ranging from Whooping Crane to Lesser Prairie-Chicken are especially likely to be harmed by wind power developments. The map provides the locations of more than 80,000 finished and proposed turbines, along with local details such as ownership, land use, conservation issues, key bird species, and vulnerable habitat.



Waved Albatross. Photo: Nick Athanas/Tropical Birding

Sometimes the bird swerves away from the test pane; sometimes it flies straight toward it. In either case the bird is captured by a mist net just before it reaches the glass panes. It is then returned to the wild.

We send roughly 80 birds toward each new glass pane that we test, judging the effectiveness of frit patterns, window films, and various kinds of photovoltaic glass. This work builds on previous research done in the United States and in Austria, and over the years, it has taught us quite a bit about the things that cause collisions and what can be done to make a building bird-safe.

We share what we have learned with manufacturers, architects, and builders. We also share our findings with our many local partner groups, in order to help them push for state and local programs that would reduce bird collisions with glass.

Advances in Glass Guidelines

This work began to pay off in a big way late in 2011 and continued in 2012. First, after years of planning and a burst of last-ditch wrangling, the city of San Francisco enacted the first set of bird-glass collision rules in the United States.

Then, making use of the research that we've been doing at the Powdermill site, the U.S. Green Building Council added what it calls a "pilot" set of bird-collision standards to the larger set of guidelines used to certify that a particular building is "green."

If this pilot credit becomes permanent, bird-friendliness will be added to an influential list of green guidelines that include energy efficiency and water conservation.

We believe the bird/glass collision problem will soon enter the environmental mainstream. Architects and planners are much more interested in bird-safe buildings than they once were. Glass manufacturers who now see a potential market are sending record numbers of potentially bird-friendly windows to our research center for testing. Finally, sales of ABC BirdTape — an inexpensive way to make windows visible to birds — rose dramatically in 2012.

Meet ABC Staff

Christine De Wolf Sheppard, Bird Collisions Campaign Manager

Life Before ABC: Curator of Birds, Wildlife Conservation Society/Bronx Zoo.

Favorite Birds: From my zoo years, Pink Pigeon, African Pygmy Geese, and other birds I raised from eggs. In the wild, hummingbirds in general and the Marvelous Spatuletail in particular.

Favorite Place to Look for Birds: Wherever I am!

Most Amazing Birding Experience: Watching a Blue-footed Booby feeding frenzy take place all around me while sitting in a boat near one of the Galápagos Islands.

Hobbies: Botanical illustration, gardening, bead weaving, folk and ballroom dancing.

Favorite Sound: Waves hitting the shore of Lake Huron, where I used to spend summer vacations.

Favorite Landscape: The coast of Patagonia from September through February, when several hundred thousand Magellanic Penguins gather to breed and raise their young.

If You Could Do One Thing for Birds: Help make bird collision guidelines standard in green building programs.



Photo: Chris Sheppard, 2012

BUILDING CAPACITY

What does it mean to “build capacity?” At ABC, it means supporting the scientific research that pinpoints rising threats to birds; securing crucial funding used to help create new bird reserves and improve existing ones; building community support for bird protection projects in far-flung locations; and forming partnerships with government agencies, other conservation groups, and high-profile research centers.

Work like this can spur bird-friendly efforts to transform entire landscapes. It can help put bird conservation programs onto national agendas. It can also help ensure that our campaigns are science-based and our victories are lasting.

“What American Bird Conservancy best brings to the table is a bold, innovative approach to conservation... a ‘let’s get this done and get it done right’ attitude.”

— Claude Gascon, Ph.D.
Chief Science Officer, Executive Vice-President
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Sustaining Conservation in Colombia

The El Dorado Bird Reserve in northeastern Colombia is a fantastic place to see rare birds, including the Black-fronted Wood-Quail, Santa Marta Screech-Owl, Rusty-headed Spinetail, Santa Marta Antpitta, and Santa Marta Warbler. It is the only place to see rare and endemic birds such as the Santa Marta Parakeet, Santa Marta Bush-Tyrant, and Santa Marta Sabrewing.

If you need a change of pace, you might want to go looking for the stunning butterflies and frogs found only in this area, or for the spectacularly rare (and unexpectedly cute) red-crested tree rat. It had not been seen since 1898 and was presumed extinct — until it showed up last May on a handrail at the El Dorado Lodge.

El Dorado sits amid dense forests on an isolated mountain with amazing views of the Caribbean Sea and of the majestic glaciers and peaks of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range. It is one of

crown jewels in a system of nearly 50 reserves set up since 1996 by ABC and Latin American partners. These reserves are part of a coordinated and unprecedented effort to protect the last remaining sites for a suite of endangered and critically endangered species identified by the Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE).

The El Dorado Bird Reserve is the first economically sustainable private AZE reserve in the Americas.

Most of these reserves protect the remaining home range of a critically endangered animal, but El Dorado does more than that. It protects the sole natural habitats of three species of birds, eight species of amphibians, and one species of mammal.

The El Dorado Bird Reserve passed a critically important milestone last year when it became the first economically sustainable private AZE reserve in the Americas. In simple terms, this means that in 2012, this reserve took in more money than it spent. The visitors, who came from all over the world, stayed in the reserve's new lodge and ate in the reserve's new restaurant. When they went exploring, they were often led by naturalists who work at El Dorado.

Granted, it is not that hard to find a private nature lodge that turns a profit, and some of them are very nice indeed. But it is much harder to end up in the black when your job includes protecting and maintaining the reserve that draws the tourists in the first place.

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range, as seen from the El Dorado Bird Reserve. Photo: Fundación ProAves



Santa Marta Warbler.
Photo: Andy Bunting



That means paying guards to keep the poachers and the squatters out, as well as paying workers to maintain the trails and forests.

In this case, it also means arranging to buy food and other items in the town at the bottom of a towering mountain and then have it driven up the narrow, lurching road that leads you back into the reserve.

Private lodges do not tend cover costs like those but El Dorado does. Also, when this lodge is “in the green” — pun intended — profits do not end up in private hands. Instead, every cent gets funneled right back into conservation programs overseen by our partner group, Fundación ProAves, the leading bird conservation organization in Colombia.

This kind of fiscal fitness was among our goals in 2005, when ABC and other conservation groups teamed up to purchase 1,700 acres of land that now form the core of El Dorado, swooping in to save key portions of these forests from developers with plans to replace them with vacation homes.

Steps Toward Sustainability

In the years that followed, we have put a lot of time and money into projects launched in part to help make El Dorado self-sustaining. Working with Fundación ProAves, we helped remove invasive pines that had been planted for timber, then helped replace those trees with native saplings favored by the region’s unique birds. The pine logs were used to build the two-story Jeniam Ecolodge and the Blue Moon Restaurant, places where it is possible to stand on the back steps and watch as birds found only here hop through the garden or maneuver for a spot at one of the bird feeders. (The only known

Building Capacity: MILESTONES

UNITED STATES: Helped secure more than \$30 million in federal funding for bird conservation projects throughout the Western Hemisphere. In the Hawaiian Islands, we advocated for federal funding used to build a 52-mile fence that will keep non-native grazing animals out of the last remaining habitat of the critically endangered Palila. In Appalachia, ABC and the Interior Department’s Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement agreed to fund the launch of a joint effort to restore hardwood forests on reclaimed mine sites.



Palila. Photo: Jack Jeffrey

LATIN AMERICA: Supported 15 nurseries that produced 500,000 seedlings in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. These trees help reforest and expand Alliance for Zero Extinction reserves, designed to save the last known habitats of critically endangered birds and other animals.

UNITED STATES: Focused national attention on the threats that outdoor cats pose to people, birds, other wildlife, and themselves. Outdoor cats kill as many as 3.7 billion birds and 20.7 billion mammals every year and spread diseases including toxoplasmosis and rabies. ABC fought state and local attempts to legalize public cat hoarding by feral cat extremists.

photograph of a Black-billed Thornbill was taken on these steps not long ago.)

ABC helped expand this reserve by another 250 acres in 2010, when it helped ProAves purchase an important tract of montane forest. In 2012, the reserve was expanded yet again, when ABC helped fund a deal to buy another 195 acres of key lands adjoining the reserve.

Local legend says that a high-elevation pond found here holds the secret to eternal life. Biologists say this is one of the last remaining homes of the critically endangered San Lorenzo harlequin frog. Perhaps most important, this latest transaction means that ABC and other groups have now protected nearly all of the uniquely palm-laden ridge that is the home to most of the world's remaining Santa Marta Parakeets.

Local Communities Get Their Share

ABC has also helped launch programs that have enabled some of the people living near the El Dorado Bird Reserve to earn a share of the tourist money. In partnership with ProAves, we've trained local women to make jewelry and candles for a gift shop in the lodge. It is part of a broader program, "Women for Conservation," which gets women and their families involved in conservation work in exchange for small business training, health care, and school supplies for their children. With support from ABC, ProAves runs this program at three other reserves around Colombia.

We hope that other AZE sites will become economically self-sustaining before long. In the last five years, new lodges and restaurants have been built at a half-dozen of these reserves. At El Dorado, where the ecotourism infrastructure seems to be quite solid, it will be easier to deal with threats in the years to come. For example, peer-reviewed research published last summer says the forests in the El Dorado Bird Reserve could be especially hard hit at low altitudes as the nearby Caribbean magnifies the effects of man-made climate change. If that's true, the paper warns that rare birds such as the Santa Marta Parakeet would need to move to higher ground. That will make it necessary to find ways to protect more of the forests near the top of this mountain, to give the amazing birds and animals found here a place to survive.

Meet ABC Staff

Sara Lara, Vice President & Senior International Conservation Officer

Life Before ABC: Civil Engineer until 2003, when I joined a Yellow-eared Parrot conservation project as a volunteer. Afterward, for six years, I served as the Executive Director of Fundación ProAves, a Colombian conservation group and ABC partner.

Favorite Bird: Yellow-eared Parrot. We fought hard to save it from extinction and so far we have succeeded. In the process, this bird changed my life.

Most Amazing Birding Experience: In Australia, I once watched a huge Southern Cassowary stride out of the forest like a dinosaur, eating fruit for a few minutes and then returning to the forest.

Favorite Sound: Latin Music.

Favorite View: I have two. First, the mountain peaks you see when looking south out of Colombia's El Dorado Reserve. Second, the Caribbean Sea as it appears to people looking north from the same spot.

If You Could Do One Thing for Birds: Reconnect young people with nature.



Photo: Rocío Merino, 2013

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We are honored to acknowledge the individuals, foundations, businesses, and others who have donated to support ABC's work. While space constraints prevent us from listing all of our donors, we are sincerely grateful for each member and every gift. We would also like to thank those who gave anonymously through the United Way or Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #12048).

Peregrine Falcon. Photo: ClipArt.com

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The Falcon Club is ABC's pivotal group of members who donate unrestricted gifts of \$1,000 or more each year. The Falcon Club is a cornerstone in the success of all our bird conservation programs and projects. A very special thank you to ABC's board members for their many contributions and introductions to other major supporters.

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— Shoab Tareen
Falcon Club member



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			David Zucker
			Rebecca Zuhlke

Green Heron. Photo: Greg Lavaty, texastargetbirds.com



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 Asociación Armonía
 Asociación Ornitológica de Costa Rica
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 Chiapas Regional Alliance
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 Ecostudies Institute
 Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC)
 Equilibrio Azul
 Flathead Lakers
 Flathead Land Trust
 Florida Department of Environmental Protection
 Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
 Florida Shorebird Alliance
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 Great Basin Bird Observatory
 Green Building Council
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 Grupo Jaragua
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Interns

Cheyenne Gillett
 Elizabeth Morse
 Allister Nelson
 Davia Palmeri
 Amy Wiedenfeld

Inca Terns. Photo: Greg Homel,
 Natural Elements Productions

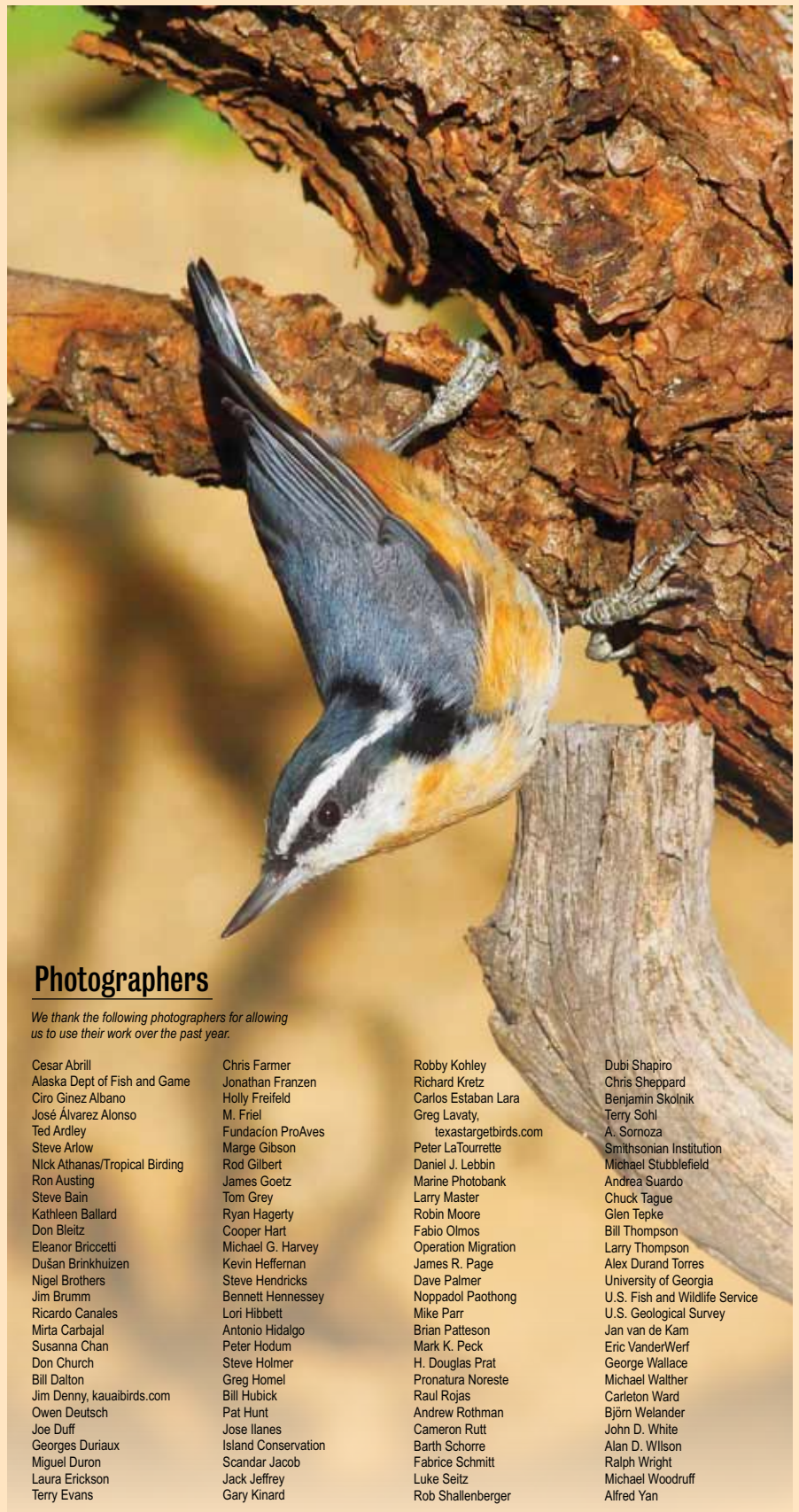
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Photographers

We thank the following photographers for allowing us to use their work over the past year.

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Alaska Dept of Fish and Game
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Nick Athanas/Tropical Birding
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Red-breasted Nuthatch. Photo: Greg Homel, Natural Elements Productions

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Bureau of Land Management	Ornithology
Richard Chamberlain	Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project
Colonial Parking/Eric Lindner	Little Mendelson
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ABC is indebted to **Richard Chamberlain** for his narration of our award-winning documentary *Endangered Hawai'i*, which explores the ongoing bird extinction crisis in our 50th state. Mr. Chamberlain added to the sense of urgency in the video and is certainly one of the main reasons why the video was so well-received, earning the International Jury Prize at EKOFILM - International Film Festival on the Environment and Natural and Cultural Heritage.

For his part, Mr. Chamberlain says the video was “something that I had to be a part of,” adding that he’d long thought of Hawai'i as one of the world’s most treasured jewels. “I lived there for many years,” he added, “so I could relate to what was happening to its environment. The video was a wonderful opportunity to give back. I’m truly thrilled to have been able to contribute.”

To view the video or order a copy, visit www.abcbirds.org.



'Akiapola'au. Photo: Jack Jeffrey

See our online version at www.abcbirds.org for lists of our valued partners, as well as the interns who support our success.

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Boreal Owl. Photo: Steve Hendricks

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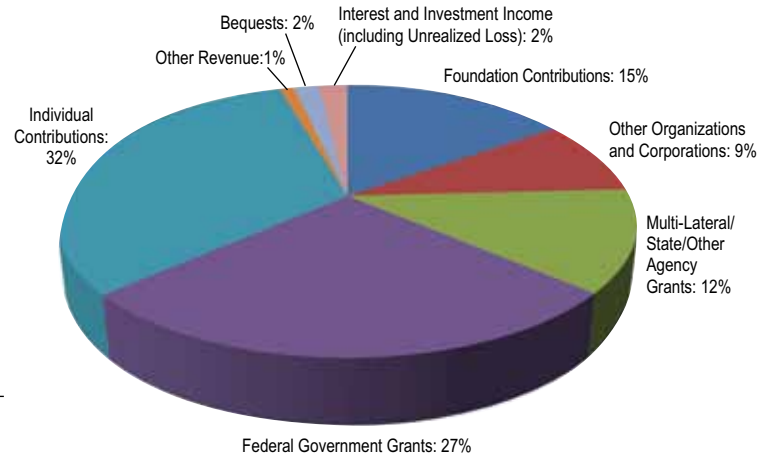
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George Wallace, Vice President, Oceans and Islands
David Wiedenfeld, Conservation Science Specialist
David Younkman, Vice President, Conservation
Dariusz Zdziebkowski, IT and Website Coordinator

2012 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

ANNUAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Individual Contributions	\$ 2,841,775
Federal Government Grants	\$ 2,423,840
Foundation Contributions	\$ 1,354,976
Multi-Lateral/State/Other Agency Grants	\$ 1,077,155
Other Organizations and Corporations	\$ 795,309
Bequests	\$ 147,225
Other Revenue	\$ 83,230
Interest and Investment Loss (incl. Unrealized Loss)	\$ 172,902
Total Annual Support and Revenue	\$ 8,896,412



ANNUAL EXPENSES

Program

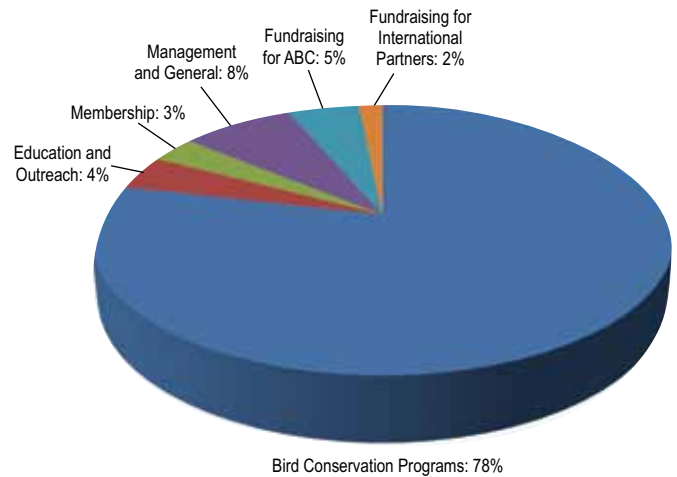
Bird Conservation Programs	\$ 7,090,138
Education and Outreach	\$ 378,194
Membership	\$ 283,412
Total Program Services	\$ 7,751,745

Supporting Services

Management and General	\$ 686,732
Fundraising	\$ 581,046
Total Supporting Services	\$ 1,267,957

Total Annual Expenses \$ 9,019,522

Net Assets at December 31, 2012 \$ 4,790,998



American Bird Conservancy's financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2012, were audited by the Certified Public Accounting firm of Gelman, Rosenberg, and Freedman. A copy of ABC's complete financial statements can be obtained by contacting: American Bird Conservancy, P.O. Box 249, The Plains, VA 20198.

Long-tailed Sylph. Photo: Greg R. Homel, Natural Elements Productions



ABC is rated an "Exceptional" Four Star Charity by the independent group Charity Navigator — their highest rating (www.charitynavigator.org).



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The Plains, VA 20198
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abc@abcbirds.org
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A Legacy For Birds – ABC Supporter Jeff Rusinow

Photo: Courtesy of Jeff Rusinow



“I’ve loved birds since I was a kid going to wildlife camp during the summers in the mountains of West Virginia. By the time I was 20, I had embraced the writings of the great conservationists Emerson, Thoreau, and Muir, and was particularly drawn to Aldo Leopold and his urgings for us to

embrace a ‘land ethic’ while cherishing the nature around us. At some point, it became quite clear to me about how we all play a critical role as stewards of our environment.

When you better understand your natural environment and the things living around you, you gain a better perspective of the interconnectivity of everything on this planet. This connection has been very empowering and is often my source of peace, spiritual comfort, and knowledge.

In practical terms, as a business guy interested in choosing my charitable donations wisely, it didn't take long to realize that the best return on investment with respect to protecting birds is with American Bird Conservancy. Their reach and overall scope of work is truly impressive. In a complicated ecosystem, made all the more challenging with myriad increasing migratory threats, ABC connects the dots and makes a big difference. That’s why I included ABC in my estate plans and joined ABC’s Legacy Circle.

My love of birds, and my interest in protecting them, helps define me, and will hopefully be part of my legacy.”



Black-throated Blue Warbler. Photo: David Cree

You too can leave a legacy for birds when you join ABC’s Legacy Circle with an estate gift through your will, retirement plan, trust, or life insurance policy. If you would like more information, or if you have already included ABC in your estate plans, please contact Planned Giving Director Jack Morrison at 540-253-5780, or at jmorrison@abcbirds.org.