

## Conservation Groups Prevent Use of Eagle-killing Pesticide

In July 2002, a coalition of conservation groups led by ABC secured an important victory for birds and other wildlife after it prompted the EPA to deny authorization to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture for the use of the deadly pesticide carbofuran. Among the participating organizations were Defenders of Wildlife, the Humane Society of the United States, National Audubon, Natural Resources Defense Council, Rachel Carson Council, Sierra Club, and World Wildlife Fund, plus several Louisiana-based groups. Carbofuran is among the most highly toxic pesticides to birds. A single granule is lethal, and more than 50 species, including Bald and Golden Eagles, Eastern Bluebird, Great Horned Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Kestrel, Northern Pintail, and Blue-winged Teal, have been documented as having died from carbofuran poisoning. The granular formulation of the pesticide was phased out from legal use beginning in 1991 because of its effect on birds. EPA estimated that prior to cancellation of the granular

formulation, up to two million birds were killed each year by carbofuran. In fact, no other substance listed under the EPA's Ecological Incident Investigation System has killed more birds, and FWS has stated that: "There are no known conditions under which carbofuran can be used without killing migratory birds." Environmentalists were alarmed when they became aware that EPA was considering a "Section 18 - Emergency Use" application for the granular form of the pesticide on up to 100,000 acres of rice crops in Louisiana to control rice water weevil. They were further outraged when EPA issued a permit allowing 10,000 acres to be dosed with the toxic substance without alerting FWS, the public, or conservation groups. ABC quickly mobilized the conservation community, and together the groups convinced EPA to reduce the permit from 10,000 acres to 2,500 acres, and open a public comment period before any further use was considered. More than 6,000 public comments subsequently resulted, including a letter signed by 55 conservation groups. EPA officials were impressed by the response, and in a letter to the groups cited "compelling feedback from the public" as one of the primary reasons the Louisiana permit was revoked. *Contact:* Patti Bright, ABC, Phone: (540)235-5780, <pbright@abcbirds.org>.



dpb

## "Missing" South American Parrot Rediscovered

This July 28, researchers with ProAves Colombia, supported by ABC and World Parrot Trust (WPT), photographed one of the world's rarest parrots in the high Andes of Colombia, confirming the survival of this long lost species. Colombian ornithologists Jorge Velasquez and Alonso Quevedo found a flock of 14 Fuertes's Parrots in a remote area of the central Andes close to Los Nevados National Park. Ninety-one years ago, in August 1911, two bird collectors from the American Museum of Natural History in New York – Arthur Allen and Leo Miller – visited the same volcano as Jorge and Alonso to explore its birdlife. They spent several months in the desolate high

*Continued on Page 6.*

## CONTENTS

Carbofuran Victory	1
Fuertes's Parrot Found	1 & 6
West Nile Virus Spreads	2
Trumpeter Swan Die-off	3
USDA Kills Birds at Dams	3
NMBCA Funding	4
Rat Removal from Islands	4
Draft EIS on Cormorants	5
ABC Climate Change Report	5
Cats Kill O'ahu Shearwaters	6
Birds and Barges in Conflict	7
Volcano Threatens Albatross	7
ABC Tower Campaign	8
Lear's Macaw Conservation	8
ABC Fenthion Campaign	9
Legal Wranglings Affect CH	9
Rat Poison Kills Birds	10
CARA LiteFunds Birds	10 & 11
DoD & Environmental Laws	11
Bush Signs Farm Bill	12
Birdwatching on the Rise	12
Power Lines Made Safer	13
ABCInteractive	13
Golden-crowned Manakin	14
Crane Conservation Act	14
New PIF Watch List	15
Salton Sea Sickness	15
New ABC IBA Map	16

## Abbreviations

ABC: American Bird Conservancy  
 EPA: Environmental Protection Agency  
 FWS: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 USDA: U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Bird Calls is the Newsletter of  
 American Bird Conservancy (ABC)  
 and the ABC Policy Council.**

Bird Calls is partially funded by a grant from the  
 International Affairs Division of the  
 U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

**Editorial Committee:**  
 George Fenwick  
 Mike Parr  
 Gavin Shire  
 Gerald Winegrad

1834 Jefferson Place, NW  
 Washington, DC 20036  
 202-452-1535/fax 202-452-1534  
 E-mail: abc@abcbirds.org  
 Web: <http://www.abcbirds.org>

The next meeting of the  
 Policy Council is at 1pm on  
 September 24, at the Hotel  
 Intercontinental in New Orleans

**ABC Policy Council Officers:**  
 Chair: Bruce Beehler  
 <bbeehler@counterpart.org>  
 Vice Chair: Perry Plumart  
 <pplumart@audubon.org>

**Representatives to the ABC Board:**  
 Bruce Beehler (as above)  
 Craig Harrison  
 <charrison@hunton.com>  
 Cynthia Lenhart  
 <lenhart@hawkmountain.org>

## West Nile Virus on the Rise

West Nile Virus (WNV), first identified in the U.S. in 1999, has spread rapidly across the country, causing widespread alarm. So far it has been identified in more than 35 states and in parts of Canada. Many municipalities are feeling pressured to "do something" in response to public concerns, and have initiated intensive pesticide spraying programs. Unfortunately, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), adulticiding (spraying of adult mosquitoes) is ineffective at controlling WNV. It also has the potential to cause the greatest harm to humans and wildlife. Instead, CDC stresses source reduction (reducing breeding sites and killing mosquito larvae) and personal protection (wearing insect repellent and long sleeved clothing). Spraying for adult mosquitoes is not effective because many mosquitos are able to breed in just a few spoonfuls of water and can produce a new generation of mosquitoes within 3-4 days. This new generation need only bite one infected animal for the disease cycle to continue. In addition, different species feed at different times of the day or night, so spraying during the day will have no effect on night feeding mosquitoes and vice versa. While spraying may be beneficial in some specific situations, risks to humans and wildlife generally far outweigh the limited benefits. WNV has had an even greater impact on birds than on humans. Incidents of infection have been recorded in nearly 80 bird species, but the



Blue Jays suffer some of the highest WNV-related mortality. Photo: FWS.

greatest mortality has been seen in crows, blue jays, and raptors. Zoos and captive breeding centers in the U.S. are very concerned about potential impacts on their avian populations. A number have reported WNV deaths in species as diverse as flamingos and penguins. In response, some facilities have tried using a vaccine developed for horses, but with little success. ABC, in collaboration with the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund, the Dallas Zoo, and others, is funding CDC to develop a bird-specific vaccine (*Bird Calls* Vol. 5, No. 3). Preliminary results from tests on American Crows are very promising, with mortality rates in infected birds reduced by 60%. The next step is a large-scale field study to evaluate the vaccine's effectiveness across a range of bird species. This could involve distributing the vaccine to zoos and captive breeding programs. The goal is to run the trial next year. *Contact:* Dr. Patti Bright, <pbright@abcbirds.org>.

## Trumpeter Swan Die-off in Northwest Washington

For the third year in a row, there has been a large die-off of Trumpeter Swans in northwest Washington state. The 241 carcasses, collected between November 2001 and March 2002, in Whatcom and Skagit Counties, were found to have died from ingestion of lead shot, which the birds eat, thinking it is grit, to aid in food digestion. This year's kill brings the total number of poisoned Trumpeters to 562 since November 1999. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Canadian Wildlife Service partnered with FWS to conduct a radio telemetry project on some Trumpeters to determine where they are picking up such large amounts of lead. Both Whatcom and Skagit counties are used extensively by hunters, and in previous years, similar studies revealed a highly

contaminated site used by a local gun club, which was subsequently cleaned up. However, this season's search did not reveal a similar hot-spot, but did aid in narrowing the search area. Additional funding is now being sought for a similar study next year, to include satellite as well as radio telemetry. In a related development, FWS proposes to approve shot formulated with tungsten, iron, nickel, and tin (TINT) as nontoxic for hunting waterfowl and coots. Possible effects of the TINT shot have been assessed, and officials from the agency believe that it does not present a significant toxicity threat to wildlife. It is hoped that approval



Trumpeter Swan. Photo: Gavin Shire.

of TINT shot will induce more waterfowl hunters to change from the illegal use of lead shot, reducing lead risks to birds and habitats. Once highly endangered, the Trumpeter now numbers some 15,000 birds migrating in the Pacific Northwest, plus a traditional, non-migratory population in the Red Rock Lakes area of Montana of around 2,500 birds. Several smaller, re-introduced populations now exist throughout Canada and the U.S. Hunting Trumpeters is still illegal, but FWS has introduced a controversial "incidental take" (*Bird Calls* Vol. 4, No. 3) to absolve hunters of mistakenly shooting Trumpeters instead of the similar Tundra Swan. Conservation groups such as Hawk Watch International have launched campaigns to promote the use of lead alternatives (*Bird Calls* Vol. 6 No. 1), and The Policy Council will propose a resolution to reduce the threat of lead in the environment at its next meeting. *Contact:* Cindy Schexnider, FWS, (360) 753-4324.

## ABC Intervenes In Shooting Of Terns, Herons, Kingfishers

ABC has joined with National Audubon, Seattle Audubon, and Defenders of Wildlife in urging USDA's Wildlife Services (WS) to cease any further lethal control of migratory birds in Washington State until completion of a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and full compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

This relates particularly to the killing of Caspian Terns at dams and hatcheries, where the birds are blamed for salmon declines despite a lack of scientific evidence. Caspian Tern take has increased from zero in 1996 and 1997 to 938 in 2001. Last year WS also killed at least 312 Double-crested Cormorants, 168 Great Blue Herons, and thousands of other birds, including Belted Kingfishers, mergansers, grebes, coots, and Buffleheads, yet has failed to complete an EIS. Seattle Audubon filed a Freedom of Information Act request in early June when WS refused to send any data on the

killing of migratory birds, but the requested information has still not been provided. WS is operating under a permit issued by FWS. ABC and other groups are pushing for a moratorium on this unnecessary killing of fish-eating birds until the completion of an EIS for the Mid-Columbia River Basin, and have urged WS to concentrate on non-lethal controls at dams and hatcheries. In response, WS has temporarily halted the shooting of Caspian Terns while researchers study their impact on salmon, but continues to kill other species. *Contact:* Gerald Winegrad, ABC, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

## Prospects Improve for Neo-tropical Migratory Bird Funding

Despite a proposed cut in funding for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act from \$3 million in 2002 to \$1 million in the President's 2003 budget, moves in both the House and Senate have helped to boost the likely funding back to \$3 million, and it may even reach \$5 million, thanks in part to pressure from conservation groups working under the auspices of the seventeen-member Multinational Species Coalition. The Coalition

includes ABC, Conservation International, World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon, and Defenders of Wildlife. The House has allocated \$5 million for the neotropical fund, and the Senate \$3 million. The final appropriation will be resolved in conference. In the meantime, Coalition members are continuing to press for full funding at \$5 million. Decisions on which projects will receive support under the 2001 appropriation of \$3 million have been announced, see: <http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NMBCA/projects.htm>. FWS received 270 eligible proposals, with 60 for U.S.-only projects, and 210 partly or exclusively for Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) projects. The fund

was designed so that at least 75% would be spent outside the U.S. with a 3:1 match requirement for all projects, although non-U.S. projects can provide an in-kind match. The fund will support projects to protect bird populations, bird habitats, to conduct monitoring, improve law enforcement, and to conduct community outreach efforts. Applications totaled \$24 million: \$4.5 million for U.S.-only projects, with \$12.8 million in matching money; and \$19.5 million for LAC projects, matched by \$80.4 million. ABC and its partners are now pushing for Congress to allocate \$100 million for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. *Contact:* Doug Ryan, FWS, <douglas\_ryan@fws.gov>.

## Birds Benefit from Island Rat Removal

Introduced mammalian predators are responsible for over 40% of bird extinctions throughout the world. Over the last six years, Island Conservation at the University of California-Santa Cruz has worked with cooperating Mexican agencies and local partners to successfully remove ecologically damaging, introduced mammals from 24 islands off Northwest Mexico. This hands-on conservation work has eliminated the only short-term extinction threat for 69% of the region's breeding seabirds, which include: Black-vented and Townsend's Shearwaters; Cassin's Auklet; Craveri's and Xantus's

Murrelets; Black, Leach's, and Least Storm-Petrels; and Yellow-footed and Heermann's Gulls. Land birds protected include seven endemic subspecies and one endemic species (the Clarión Wren). With the intervention of ABC in support of National Park Service in a court suit (*Bird Calls* Vol. 6, No. 1), Island Conservation



Rat control on islands has benefitted several rare species including Xantus's Murrelet. Photo: courtesy of the American Trader Trustee Council and the Anacapa Island Restoration Project.

successfully eradicated black rats from one islet of Anacapa (one of the U.S. Channel Islands) in 2001. The two remaining islets are scheduled for rat eradication this fall, further protecting populations of Xantus's Murrelet and Ashy Storm-petrel. The conservation model developed on Anacapa and in Mexico may be applied to other islands, including other Channel Islands off the coast of California, the Aleutian Islands in Alaska where introduced rats threaten the world's largest colony of Whiskered Auklets, and the Juan Fernández Islands in Chile where the Pink-footed Shearwater, Juan Fernández Petrel, Stejneger's Petrel, and the Juan Fernández Firecrown are all threatened by introduced species. *Contact:* Dr. Bernie Tershy, Island Conservation, <tershy@islandconservation.org>.

## Draft Depradation Order Prepared For Cormorants

FWS has received and reviewed more than 1,000 written comments on a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on management of the Double-Crested Cormorant (DCC). The majority of comments were submitted by fishing enthusiasts, aquaculturists, and others supporting significant measures to reduce cormorant populations. FWS is now proceeding with the publication of a proposed rule that would implement the preferred alternative in the DEIS, one which was vigorously opposed by the conservation community and many scientists. Under the proposed rule, to be published in September, FWS would allow states and federal agencies to shoot unlimited

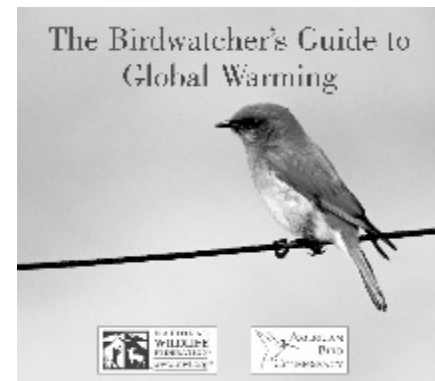
numbers of DCCs, without permits, under a Public Resource Depredation Order. State and federal agencies could also destroy cormorant eggs and nest sites. To shoot cormorants or destroy eggs and nests, the agencies would have to find that the cormorants are injurious to public resources such as fish, plants, or other species. Currently, state and federal agencies may use non-lethal control methods but may not shoot cormorants or take their eggs without permits from FWS justifying each particular case. The public will have 60 days to comment on the rule and on the DEIS before FWS finalizes its action in the form of a final rule and EIS, expected in early 2003. The DCC has been maligned and persecuted in the U.S. for over a century, mainly because of its fish diet. Populations of the DCC were first decimated by human

persecution, and extensive drainage and degradation of wetlands, followed by the widespread use of DDT and other pesticides. Cormorant populations reached their lowest point in the mid-1970s, but rebounded when DDT and other contaminants were removed from the market and the species was placed under the protection of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Conservationists and scientists, including ABC and its partners, have urged FWS to apply sound science to any cormorant management plan, and to reject efforts to scapegoat the birds for fishery declines where no conclusive evidence exists. The FWS Cormorant DEIS and its management plan are on the ABC website ([www.abcbirds.org/policy/piscivors.htm](http://www.abcbirds.org/policy/piscivors.htm)), as is the ABC position statement. *Contact:* Gerald Winegrad, <[gww@abcbirds.org](mailto:gww@abcbirds.org)>.

## Birds and Climate Change Report

ABC and The National Wildlife Federation have produced a joint report entitled "The Birdwatcher's Guide to Global Warming," presenting an in-depth analysis of how global climate change is affecting and may continue to affect populations of certain bird species. "We are highlighting these problems not to cause alarm, but rather to inform and educate the nature lover in us all," said Mark Van Putten, President of the National Wildlife Federation. "Like other environmental problems we can do something about global warming." Birds are important

indicators of environmental conditions and alert us to potentially catastrophic ecological events that could transpire should current trends continue. The booklet draws attention to the fact that ranges of some birds are already shifting and migration times are changing. This has a follow-on effect on entire ecosystems as birds are important pollinators, seed dispersers, and insect predators. The report comes with a supplement for each of the lower 48 states, addressing concerns particular to each: from the effect on tourism in Florida, to the loss of American Redstart, Bobolink, and the Evening Grosbeak from Washington State in summer, and the disappearance of the Baltimore Oriole from its namesake town in



Jointly produced by ABC and The National Wildlife Federation, the Birdwatcher's Guide to Global Warming is available on-line.

Maryland. The report is available at [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org), and can be ordered in hard copy from ABC. *Contact:* Jeff Price, ABC, <[jprice@mho.net](mailto:jprice@mho.net)>.

## Domestic Cats Impact Wedge- tailed Shearwater on O‘ahu

A recent study of a colony of feral cats on O‘ahu, Hawaii has revealed a threat to the island’s population of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. The study compares breeding success at two sites. The first was at Malaekahana, home to three small shearwater nesting colonies, where a group of cats, fed daily by the public, recently killed 44 adult birds. The second population was at nearby Moku‘auia Island State Seabird Sanctuary, where feral cats are absent. The difference in chick production was startling, with 62% of nest burrows at Moku‘auia succeeding, compared with only 20% at Malaekahana. Reproductive success went down to zero at the nesting colony closest to the cats, and this is where the majority of the dead adults were found. Long-lived seabirds such as shearwaters, which

generally have very low nest productivity and often do not breed until they are five or more years old. This makes them extremely sensitive to the loss of breeding adults. The authors of the study conclude that providing supplemental food to the cat colony is maintaining the predators at abnormally high densities, and removal of the cats would increase the survival and reproduction of shearwaters attempting to breed at Malaekahana. Although Wedge-tailed Shearwaters are not declining range-wide, cat predation left unchecked could lead to local



Wedge-tailed Shearwater killed by a cat at Malaekahana, O‘ahu. Photo: Dave Smith, Hawaii Div. Forestry & Wildlife.

extinctions in Hawaii. The authors of a second study by Florida International University concluded that land managers and conservationists should be more proactive in dealing with stray and feral cats in natural areas. The study compared trap-neuter-release of feral cats at two sites in South Florida, one of which is adjacent to Key Largo Hammocks State Botanical Site, home to migratory birds and the Critically Endangered Key Largo woodrat and Key Largo cotton mouse. The study concluded that preventing the establishment of cat colonies is far more effective than trying to remove animals already in place, and recommended conservationists increase their efforts to educate the public on responsible pet ownership. Other recommendations included educating natural area staff regarding cat predation on native species, because in some cases, staff may be feeding the cats or helping others to do so. For more information on both studies, *contact*: Linda Winter, <lwinter@abcbirds.org>.

### *Fuertes’s Parrot*, from Page 1.

Andean wilderness, and discovered a “distinct and interesting” parrot that was previously unknown to science. The birds were described the following year, and named *Hapalopsittaca fuertesi*, or Fuertes’s Parrot, also called the ‘Multicolored Parrot’ by local farmers. Between the original discovery and this July, the continued existence of this intriguing species has remained a mystery with no confirmed sightings of the bird. Last year, ProAves Colombia, a Colombian bird conservation group, decided to

mount a determined search for the species to see whether it could be located and protected. The group was supported by Dr. Paul Salaman, an expert in Colombian ornithology from the British Museum of Natural History, and received initial funding from ABC and World Parrot Trust. The project also studied another rare Andean parrot, the Rusty-faced Parrot, and has subsequently attracted additional support from Fundación Natura, Conservation International, The British Natural History Museum, and Instituto de

Ciencias Naturales – Universidad Nacional de Colombia. The project recently received the Gold Award at this year’s British Petroleum International Conservation Awards. To date, just 14 Fuertes’s Parrots, including three juveniles, have been discovered, surviving in just a few dozen hectares of forest. Now that the researchers know the specific habitat preferences and diet of the species, it is hoped that they can locate and protect other surviving flocks in the region. *Contact*: Mike Parr, ABC, <mparr@abcbirds.org>.

## Birds and Barges in Conflict on Missouri River

FWS has ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers not to release water from two South Dakota dams into the Missouri River to prevent destruction of Endangered Piping Plover and Least Tern nests. The proposed action by the Corps would have allowed barge traffic to continue using a portion of the river between Nebraska City and Kansas City that is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate due to recent droughts, but would have flooded the plover and tern nests, or necessitated their removal. Both species nest on sandbars and islands in the river and have begun nesting lower down to remain close to the water's edge. FWS declared that the nests could not be moved to accommodate higher water levels because this largely unsuccessful

practice would contravene both the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. As river levels continue to drop, barge operators are warning of potential fuel spills should they run aground. The problem is symptomatic of larger flood control issues being argued by the barge industry and proponents of Missouri River restoration. In November 2000, an Endangered Species Act consultation between FWS and the Corps resulted in a Joint Biological Opinion on the river. The two



The spillway at Gavins Point, one of the two dams on the Missouri River that have been in conflict with resident birds. Photo: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

agencies agreed on a five-point plan aimed at returning the river to a more natural ecosystem, benefitting both the birds and the river's other endangered species, the pallid sturgeon. The plan included a National Academy of Sciences-endorsed suggestion to raise early spring water levels that will help rebuild the islands and bars on which the birds nest. Under the agreement, the Corps has until March 2003 to change its management practices on the Missouri before falling out of compliance with the Endangered Species Act. The Missouri River and its tributaries have a population of more than 1050 Piping Plovers and 650 Least Terns. In April 2002, the non-profit organization, American Rivers, designated the Missouri the nation's most endangered river for the second year in a row. *Contact:* Gavin Shire, ABC, (202) 452-1535 x 207, <gshire@abcbirds.org>.

## Volcanic Eruption Threatens Short-tailed Albatross

Torishima Island, the key breeding site for the Short-tailed Albatross, suffered a volcanic eruption in August 2002. The island, 360 miles south of Tokyo, supports 1,415 of the Critically Endangered birds, over 85% of the world's breeding population. The volcano last erupted in August 1939, and prior to that in 1902, when it killed all 125 residents on the island who were there slaughtering hundreds of

thousands of albatrosses for the feather trade. This event came to be known in Japan as "The Revenge of the Albatross." Luckily, this most recent eruption took place after the albatrosses had finished breeding and had left the island, and does not appear large enough to have impacted the nesting grounds. However, continued eruption could impair or prevent breeding when the birds return in October. The Short-tailed Albatross has coexisted with such eruptions throughout its evolution and was able to thrive, once numbering in the millions. However, previous decimation by the feather trade and now continued

longline mortality has placed the birds in the precarious position that a similar, less fortunately-timed eruption could have far more serious consequences. With only 260 birds breeding outside Torishima island, this only serves to highlight the need to prevent albatross deaths on longlines to assure the birds' long-term survival. *Contact:* Gerald Winegrad, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

**Visit ABC's  
Website  
[www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)**

## ABC Steps Up Tower Campaign

In August 2002, ABC, The Forest Conservation Council, and Friends of the Earth filed a petition with the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), requesting a moratorium on the licensing of any new communications towers along the Gulf Coast until their impact on migratory birds has been addressed. The Gulf Coast, defined here as a 100-mile wide belt from Port Isabel, Texas to Tampa Bay, Florida, is a recognized critical stopover region for neotropical migratory birds. Birds are drawn to the lights atop the towers, particularly at night and during low cloud, and circle in confusion, dying by the thousand in collisions with the tower, each other, or even the ground. FWS estimates that as many as 40 million birds are killed each year in these

collisions nationwide. The groups believe that FCC is in violation of several federal environmental laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, by illegally licensing 5,797 towers in the region without proper environmental review, and by failing to address the cumulative effects of both existing and proposed towers over 199ft. The groups are seeking an order from FCC mandating the retroactive preparation of environmental reviews on the illegally authorized towers. The groups are also calling for the preparation of a comprehensive environmental impact statement ("EIS") by FCC on their overall licensing program in the Gulf Coast region, and the proper implementation of public participation procedures. FWS has already recognized the need for a comprehensive EIS on the FCC's tower licensing program and has requested such a document directly

from the agency. Concurrent with the Gulf Coast petition, ABC is registering appeals to halt construction of specific tall towers that pose a danger to migratory birds. Earlier this year, FCC rejected a previous round of appeals, brought by Forest Conservation Council and Friends of the Earth, ruling that the appellants lacked "standing", that is, did not demonstrate they had been sufficiently harmed to gain the right to appeal. To satisfy this legal requirement, the new appeals have included declarations by ABC members who birdwatch regularly in the vicinity of newly proposed towers. Once standing has been demonstrated, FCC will be forced to rule on merits of the appeals. To date, construction of ten towers in five states has been stopped pending FCC ruling. Meanwhile, ABC has been asking Congress to provide \$350,000 necessary for research to find measures of prevention bird deaths at towers. *Contact:* Gerald Winegrad, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

## Good News for Lear's Macaw

The population of the Critically Endangered Lear's Macaw has climbed 30% to 246 individuals since the last population surveys in the late 1990s. This year alone, a minimum of 28 chicks fledged from 23 nests. However, the conservation of the species is still hampered by the continuing demand among international collectors. British parrot smuggler Harry Sissen received a two and a half year jail sentence in 2000 for importing three of the birds which are valued at

around \$40,000 each. Conservation efforts have involved a range of groups including the Brazilian environmental protection agency Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis (IBAMA), BioBrasil



Lear's Macaw. Photo: M. Reynolds

Foundation, Fundação Biodiversitas, World Parrot Trust, and Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund. Currently, efforts are focusing on increasing the number of licuri palms which the species depends on for food, and preventing poaching. The Macaw is restricted to rugged nesting cliffs and surrounding thorn scrub in northeastern Bahia. The location of its nesting grounds were unknown until 1978 when they were discovered by the late Brazilian ornithologist Helmut Sick, who also discovered the Golden-crowned Manakin (see story P. 14). *Contact:* Mike Parr, ABC <abc@abcbirds.org>.

## ABC Campaign Pressures EPA Over Fenthion

ABC's campaign to cancel the pesticide fenthion in Florida (*Bird Calls* Vol. 6, No. 1) has so far resulted in more than 16,000 emails to EPA and other regulators from its website [www.banfenthion.org](http://www.banfenthion.org). This unprecedented reaction to one of the most toxic pesticides to birds

currently on the market, facilitated meetings with EPA Assistant Administrator, Steve Johnson, and others, and has now caught the attention of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). DEP has the authority to impose more stringent standards for pesticides in Florida than those set by EPA, and has requested a meeting with ABC and others to discuss the issue. In a related development, a federal grand jury, investigating bird deaths (including a federally Endangered Piping

Plover) on Tigertail Beach, Marco Island, in Collier County, issued a subpoena to Frank Van Essen, Director of Collier Mosquito Control District, on April 25, demanding that he hand over all fenthion-related records (including reports, memos, and computer files) to a FWS special agent. FWS has declined to comment on the investigation and it is not known whether any charges will be forthcoming. *Contact:* Dr. Patti Bright, ABC, (540) 253-5780, <[pbright@abcbirds.org](mailto:pbright@abcbirds.org)>.

## Legal Moves Threaten to Nullify Critical Habitat Designation

On May 11, the 10<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of a group of cattle owners who had protested the FWS designation of 600 miles of riparian forest as Critical Habitat (CH) for the southwestern Willow Flycatcher in seven southwestern states. The Court stated that FWS had not taken account of the potential economic impact on cattle owners who graze cattle on stream-side vegetation (such grazing would have become illegal under the designation). FWS must now produce a revised CH designation following an economic impact study, and also consider the economic impact of the original listing of the species, despite the fact that the Endangered Species Act (ESA) expressly states that no economic consideration should be applied to listing decisions. The



Recent court cases have impacted Critical Habitat decisions on the California Gnatcatcher and other Endangered Species. Photo: FWS.

main difference between listing and CH designation is that CH can include areas important for the species' recovery that are not currently occupied by the species (CH only concerns federal lands or federal agency actions). Although the ESA requires CH to be designated for all listed species, FWS has traditionally viewed Critical Habitat designations as a less effective layer of protection than listing, and most CH designations have been forced by legal action by environmental

groups. Southwestern Riparian habitats have been in decline for decades because of overgrazing, jeopardizing populations of Yellow-billed Cuckoo and southwestern Willow Flycatcher in the process. The recovery of these populations will require occupancy of a greater area of prime habitat than is currently available to either species. The Court's decision creates a precedent that has now been cited in cases concerning CH for Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl and California Gnatcatcher, and may also affect a case involving Western Snowy Plover (see *Bird Calls* vol 5 No 3). The decision ultimately threatens to unravel the protection afforded Endangered Species under the CH provisions of the ESA, and potentially through the listing process as well. *Contact:* Mike Parr, ABC, <[mparr@abc.org](mailto:mparr@abc.org)>.

**JOIN ABC TODAY**  
Use the membership form  
on the back cover or join  
on-line at:  
[www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)

## Rat Poison Kills Birds—ABC Calls for Restrictions

EPA will soon release for public comment the risk assessment for a cluster of nine rodenticides. Among them is the known bird-killer brodifacoum, widely available to the public as an active ingredient in rat and mouse baits such as Talon, Havoc, and D-Con. Most bird kills from brodifacoum have been the result of non-target poisonings. Rodents that have consumed bait laced with the pesticide do not die immediately, and may continue to consume the bait for several days, building up levels of poison in their bodies many times the fatal dose. Birds of prey that hunt near agricultural areas or industrial and urban buildings then prey on these rodents and consume the poison. Estimating the exact magnitude of these non-target bird deaths is difficult because dying animals tend

to retreat to secluded locations during the final hours of poisoning. Furthermore, dead birds may die far from the site where they were exposed and can quickly be taken by scavengers. Despite these difficulties, bird kills from brodifacoum have been widely documented. The EPA has on record numerous incidents that include Golden Eagle, Great Horned Owl, Eastern Screech-Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and American Crow. Also recorded are incidents involving mammals such as foxes (including the Endangered



Great Horned Owls have been killed when they prey on brodifacoum-poisoned rodents. Photo: FWS.

San Joaquin Kit Fox), a mountain lion, and a bobcat. California is re-evaluating brodifacoum use because of documented non-target wildlife poisoning, as is New Zealand. ABC strongly opposes brodifacoum use by the general public, but recognizes its effectiveness in situations where careful, controlled application aids in protecting endangered and migratory bird species on islands from introduced rodent predation. This rodenticide is too hazardous to birds and other wildlife to be used where less toxic approaches are available, or where the bait cannot be controlled. ABC will send a letter to the EPA during the 60-day comment period following the release of the risk assessment. Others concerned for wildlife are encouraged to do the same. Future issues of *Bird Calls* will provide information on how to get involved. For more information on brodifacoum visit ABC's website: <http://www.abcbirds.org/pesticides/Profiles/brodifacoum.htm>. Contact: Dr. Patti Bright, ABC, (540) 253-5780, <[pbright@abcbirds.org](mailto:pbright@abcbirds.org)>.

## Cara Lite Money Reaches Birds

As an outgrowth of the effort to pass the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) in 2000, Congress appropriated funds to augment state-based wildlife programs. States are beginning to use some of the \$75 million appropriated in FY 2001 and \$80 million in FY 2002 for bird conservation. From Sage Grouse to Sage Sparrow, from Alaska to Connecticut, state projects

are benefitting avian species. In Alaska, the new funding supported the Alaska Bird Academy, a two-day, hands-on, outdoor-based program for 4th and 5th grade students. The goal is to inspire interest and excitement over birds and their habitats. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game also helped fund the Alaska Bird Observatory's ongoing mist-netting station to examine population dynamics, timing of life-history events, and habitat use. In Colorado, the Division of Wildlife (DoW) began an effort to study Gunnison

Sage-Grouse, a species that may be listed as endangered unless action is taken soon. The research should help the DoW focus on recovery efforts in critical habitat. In Kansas, the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory has partnered with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to conduct a 3-year section-based inventory project for shortgrass prairie birds. In Connecticut, a migratory bird stopover habitat survey has been initiated, work on the Connecticut Coastal Birding Trail has begun, *Continued on Page 11.*

## DoD Requests Exemptions from MBTA and ESA

Conservationists have been working to prevent Congress from granting a Department of Defense (DoD) request for blanket exemption from some critical environmental laws, including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA). These requests are fueled by the events of 9/11 and a Federal District Court case, Center for Biological Diversity v. Pirie, decided March 14, 2002. The Court ruled that the MBTA does apply to military bombing and strafing at Farallon de Medinilla Island in the Northern Marianas, home to the flightless Micronesian Megapode, Great Frigatebird, and other seabirds, and issued an injunction prohibiting future activities likely to kill birds without a permit. On May 10, 2002, The House voted to exempt most DoD activities from the MBTA restrictions and from some provisions of the ESA. While sensitive to the needs of the

military, ABC, National Audubon, Defenders of Wildlife, and other partners have resisted these blanket exemptions, given that the President already has the power to grant the DOD exemptions from these laws when national security is at risk. The House refused to vote on an amendment to delete these exemptions offered by Reps. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) and John Dingell (D-Mich.). However, The Senate passed its Defense Authorization bill without the exemptions, leaving the final outcome to be decided by a House-Senate conference committee in September. DOD has over 25 million acres of land under its jurisdiction with habitats that support most of the migratory bird species in the U.S. There are many



In the past, DoD has effectively managed populations of rare species without conflict with military training. Photo: Bell's Vireo, by Greg Lasley.

examples of birds and the military coexisting compatibly with endangered and threatened species, such as California's Camp Pendleton, which has maintained its breeding population of Endangered least Bell's Vireo (70% of the total U.S. population) without conflict with military training exercises. Active management at Ft. Riley in Kansas has helped prevent the Watch-Listed Henslow's Sparrow from being added to the ESA, and under Navy management, the Endangered San Clemente subspecies of Loggerhead Shrike has increased in the wild from 11 birds in 1998 to more than 90 today, while military bombardment and training have continued on San Clemente Island. Several bases, such as Ft. Hood, Texas, have working management agreements with The Nature Conservancy, while others have staff biologists who manage birds to ensure their protection while permitting the continuation of military training. Congressional exemption of most DOD activities from the MBTA and other laws could jeopardize these efforts. *Contact:* Gerald Winegrad, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

### *CARA Lite, from Page 10.*

and an assessment of shorebird dependence on horseshoe crabs has been initiated. The FY 2003 State Wildlife Grants funding is currently being decided in Congress, with the House supporting \$100 million and the Senate supporting \$60 million. Conservationists are pushing for the \$100 million to be decided in the Interior budget bill in conference committee. While there is significant potential for enhanced

bird conservation, some of the funds approved by Congress for important educational and recreational projects such as the Alaska Bird Academy and the Connecticut Birding Trail were eliminated by federal restrictions in 2002. These restrictions on education and recreation are expected to continue for FY 2003 and will be extended to 2004 unless Congress acts. This situation only underscores the

importance of reliable, long-term wildlife funding for the states (the need for a CARA-type approach). In the meantime, efforts to revive CARA-type legislation continue. It is hoped that a bill will pass in the waning days of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress or, barring that, will have a better chance in the next Congress. *Contact:* Paul J. Baicich, American Birding Association, <baicich@aba.org>

## Farm Bill To Provide Record Conservation Funding

On May 13, President Bush signed the 2002 U.S. Farm Bill (Farm Security and Rural Investment Act), which increases federal conservation spending by 80% over the previous 1996 bill to \$17.1 billion over the next ten years. Of particular interest to conservationists is funding provided for both the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The WRP will receive \$1.5 billion through 2007, to pay landowners for easements and to provide wetland restoration funding covering up to 2.275 million acres.

The CRP, which pays landowners to convert working farmland to less intensive uses by planting trees and grasses for improved wildlife habitat, will receive \$1.517 billion. This will increase the amount of land that can be improved for wildlife from 36.4 million acres to 39.2 million acres. The Bill provides \$360 million for The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, through 2007, for cost-share payments to landowners to develop wildlife habitat, and also introduces a new initiative, the Grasslands Reserve Program, which will include funding to conserve up to two million acres of grassland and rangeland in 10 to 30-year contracts, at a cost of \$254 million. This will help protect critical habitat for declining grassland songbirds such as the Grasshopper Sparrow, Lark Bunting, and Western Meadowlark.

The Farmland Protection Program (FPP) will receive a nearly twenty-fold increase to \$985 million for the purchase of conservation easements that will protect farmland and habitat from non-agricultural development. There are also provisions for \$100 million for the Forest Land Enhancement Program, \$2 billion for the Conservation Security Program, \$5.8 billion for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, plus a Conservation Corridor Demonstration Program on the Delmarva Peninsula to integrate federal, state, and local farm conservation efforts. Overall, the Farm Bill provides more money for birds, wildlife, and their habitat than has ever been contained in a farm bill. *Contact:* Sean McMahon, <smcmahon@audubon.org>, and see: [http://www.usda.gov/farmbill/conservation\\_fb.html](http://www.usda.gov/farmbill/conservation_fb.html).

## Birding Still on the Rise

FWS has released preliminary data from the 2001 U.S. Bureau of Census survey of wildlife-related recreation. The survey shows that birding continues to be America's fastest growing wildlife-related recreational activity. The total number of people who regularly observe birds grew from 42.1 million in 1996 to 46 million, while residential bird feeding held steady at around 52 million. The 18.3 million "serious" birders - those who travel to see birds (up 630,000 since 1996) spent 308 million combined days in the field during 2001. Overall, wildlife watching is the only activity in the census to have

grown since 1996 with both hunting and fishing showing slight declines. In total, there were 66 million wildlife watchers in 2001, spending \$34 billion on their pursuit, an increase from the 62.8 million watchers in 1996. By comparison 47 million hunters and fishermen spent \$55 billion on their pastime in 2001. Migratory bird hunters have held steady at around three million (1.6 million being duck hunters). The final FWS report, which will be released in October, will provide more details on the census. Two possibilities for the growth in birding are the launch of the hugely popular *Sibley Guide to Birds*, and the explosive growth of birding trails, exemplified by the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. Trails are now being developed in



Birdwatching: America's fastest growing wildlife-related hobby. Photo: FWS.

numerous states and there is extensive information on the internet (e.g. [www.birdingtrail.org](http://www.birdingtrail.org)). ABC is currently developing an Oregon Cascades Birding Trail with funding from the National Forest Foundation, which will be the first of several birding trails in the state. See: [www.oregonbirdingtrails.org](http://www.oregonbirdingtrails.org). *Contact:* Bob Altman, ABC, <baltman@abcbirds.org>.

## MOU Protects Raptors from Electrocutation

An agreement has been signed between FWS and Xcel Energy Corporation, aimed at reducing the deaths of eagles and other raptors on power lines across 12 states in the north-central and southwestern U.S. The voluntary memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed on April 19, 2002 and outlines the development of an "avian action plan," which will evaluate the problem and seek to eliminate the threats to large birds by redesigning or retrofitting the company's poles and lines. Tens of thousands of birds, including Bald and Golden Eagles, hawks, and owls are thought to die each year as a result of power line electrocutions. Their large wings are able to span the gap between two lines, completing a deadly circuit. There are simple measures that power companies can employ to dramatically reduce these

incidents, such as widening the gap between lines, better insulating poles, and creating attractive perches away from danger spots, but some companies have been unwilling to pay to fix the problem. However, in a landmark case in August 1999, the Moon Lake Electric Association Inc. of Utah was found by a federal judge to be in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act for the deaths



Incidents such as this electrocuted Golden Eagle should be dramatically reduced thanks to the historic agreement with Xcel Energy. Photo: FWS.

of birds on its power lines, even though those deaths were unintentional. Although FWS has subsequently been able to prosecute electric companies whose lines or poles kill migratory birds, it has placed a larger emphasis on working cooperatively with those companies. Under this new agreement with Xcel, the fourth largest combination gas/electric company in the nation, FWS will exercise its discretionary authority not to prosecute any bird deaths as long as the power company works to implement the MOU. FWS will also help Xcel's efforts by issuing permits to move some bird nests on power poles or structures. "We're pleased that Xcel Energy has chosen to lead by example," said Ralph Morgenweck, FWS Regional Director. "They have made a commitment to develop an avian protection plan and work with The Service to ensure all 90,000 miles of their electrical lines and facilities become more bird friendly." *Contact:* Dan Sobieck, FWS, (303) 236-7917, or Steve Roalstad, Xcel Energy, (303) 294-8900.

## ABC Interactive!

ABC's website now features a range of interactive pages to provide site visitors with opportunities to engage in ABC's ongoing campaigns and programs. Web surfers can now register as *Cats Indoors!* activists, pledge to keep their cat indoors, or assist ABC in actions to prevent communication towers from killing birds (see article P. 8). ABC's campaign to cancel the pesticide fenthion in Florida, sponsored by the Florence Fund, continues to

draw activists (see article P. 9), and the new campaign to prevent seabird deaths on longlines is attracting the attention of fisheries regulators. With a single mouse click, activists can email regulators to request better protection measures for albatrosses and other seabirds from longline fishing hooks. ABC invites all *Bird Calls* readers to go to [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org) and visit any or all of the interactive pages. Site visitors also have the option to sign up for ABC's new email update system "Birdwire," which will

ensure that ABC supporters are kept up-to-date with ongoing program developments and new campaigns. *Contact:* Gavin Shire, ABC, (202) 452-1535, <[gshire@abcbirds.org](mailto:gshire@abcbirds.org)>.

**The next Policy Council meeting will be held in conjunction with the North American Ornithological Conference on September 24, at the Hotel Intercontinental in New Orleans.**

## Golden-crowned Manakin Mystery Resolved

Because two rivers in the Brazilian state of Pará have the same name, the fate of the Golden-crowned Manakin remained a mystery for the 45 years following its discovery in 1957. Both the rivers, named Cururu, are right-bank tributaries of the same, larger river, the Tapajós, adding to the confusion. Five researchers had looked for the species along the wrong river prior to spring 2002 when, by chance, José Fernando Pacheco and Fábio Olmos found the bird on the more northerly of the two rivers. Further research revealed that this was the same place it was first discovered

by the famous Brazilian ornithologist Helmut Sick. The distinctive male Manakin is bright green with a yellow cap and beady white eye. The species is listed as Vulnerable in the book, *Threatened Birds of the World*, and its range map is marked only with a large question mark over the interior of Brazil. At the time of the discovery, the two Brazilian ornithologists were conducting a survey along the



The newly-rediscovered Golden-crowned Manakin. Photo: Fabio Olmos.

line of the Cuiabá-Santarém Road which is planned to be paved as part of the Avança Brasil Development Program to facilitate access by the logging industry. The Brazilian Government is encouraging settlement in the area and land continues to be cleared for grazing. The new road now appears to present an imminent threat to the Manakin's continued survival. It is entirely possible that many more bird species can be rediscovered by independent birders and tour groups. Locating these populations is a vital first step in developing the necessary conservation measures. For a complete list of these "lost" species in the Americas see ABC's web site at [www.abcbirds.org/international/last\\_seen.htm](http://www.abcbirds.org/international/last_seen.htm).  
*Contact:* Mike Parr, ABC, (202) 452-1535, <[mparr@abcbirds.org](mailto:mparr@abcbirds.org)>.

## Crane Act in the Senate

In August, Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI), introduced S. 2847, the Crane Conservation Act of 2002, for the worldwide conservation of cranes. Building on the successes of existing Multinational Species Conservation Funds, the bill would authorize \$3 million each year for five years, to be offset by rescinding \$18 million in unspent funds from the Energy Department's Clean Coal Technology Program. The funds would be administered by FWS. Cranes are among the most endangered family of birds in the world, with ten out of fifteen species at risk of extinction. In North America, conservation efforts on Whooping Cranes and the Florida

subspecies of Sandhill Crane would benefit from the act, but at least 50% of the federal money must be used for species on other continents, such as the Asian Sarus Crane, and African Wattled Crane. Grants would be made for the protection, restoration, acquisition, and management of habitat; research and monitoring of known populations; assistance in the development of management plans; enforcement and habitat protection through community participation; reintroduction of cranes to the wild; and community outreach and education. This legislation has the potential to focus much needed attention on some of the world's most majestic and endangered birds and help reverse their decline. *Contact:* Herb Raffaele, FWS, <[Herb\\_Raffaele@fws.gov](mailto:Herb_Raffaele@fws.gov)>.

## ABC Announces International Grants Awards

ABC's 2002 Small Grants Program, in partnership with FWS, has awarded funding to seven bird conservation projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. The list of recipients is posted to the International section of ABC's Website: [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org). The coming 2003 grant round will focus on conservation projects targeting the key sites for Endangered and Critically Endangered species in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Contact:* Mike Parr, ABC, <[mparr@abcbirds.org](mailto:mparr@abcbirds.org)>.

## Partners In Flight Produces New Watch List

Partners In Flight (PIF) is currently writing the North American Landbird Conservation Plan which will provide geographic and habitat priorities for landbird conservation across the continent. PIF has spent the last six years producing detailed Bird Conservation Plans at the level of states and physiographic areas ([www.PartnersInFlight.org](http://www.PartnersInFlight.org)), but there has been continued interest in a continental plan as well. The centerpiece of this continental plan is the Watch List, an assessment process that rates landbirds in terms of conservation priority by means of a scoring system (<http://www.rmbo.org/pif/pifdb.html>). To ensure the continued accuracy of the Watch List, the PIF Species

Assessment Technical Committee has undertaken a full review and update of the species ranking scores. As a result, several modifications have been made, including: updating "Population Trend" scores from the latest Breeding Bird Survey (BBS); coordinating fully with Canada, and increasing coordination with Mexico (e.g., using Mexican scores for many "border birds"); replacing "Relative



The re-assessment of the Partners in Flight Watch List will result in a new list in September 2002. Scoring for birds like the Rufous Hummingbird may be adjusted. Photo: FWS.

Abundance" scores from the BBS with an estimate of the species' actual continental population size; using analysis of Christmas Bird Count data for some species to corroborate or replace population trend data from the BBS; and modifying the scoring system itself to use a weighted index, rather than a simple total of the assessment attributes as was done for the 2000 Watch List. Currently, the scoring system has only been developed for landbirds, but PIF will be working with the other bird conservation initiatives (waterbirds, shorebirds etc.) toward the goal of having all bird species assessed according to a single system, from Canada to Argentina. The new Watch List will be released in September 2002 and posted to the ABC website. It is expected to list around 100 land bird species. *Contact:* Terry Rich, National Coordinator, Partners in Flight, <[terry\\_rich@fws.gov](mailto:terry_rich@fws.gov)>.

## Salton Sea Sickness

The 376 square mile Salton Sea in southern California, an ABC-designated Globally Important Bird Area, is facing an increasing barrage of threats and is in need of urgent action to avert a potential environmental catastrophe. The Sea has been experiencing high levels of eutrophication, salinization, and contamination, leading to diminished water quality, with several large recent bird kills due to botulism outbreaks, and fish die-offs due to algal blooms. The worst bird kill to date involved more than 8,500 American White Pelicans in 1996 (*Bird Calls* Vol. 4, No. 3). The

Sea's salinity has now reached 44 parts per thousand, making it 25% more saline than the Pacific Ocean. With present freshwater inflows, four million tons of salt must be removed from the lake each year just to maintain current salinity levels. Various new options to desalinate the Sea are being investigated, but all are extremely costly. These costs could balloon to well over \$1.7 billion under reduced inflows proposed by the current California 4.4 Plan. The Plan aims to reduce California's dependency on freshwater from the Colorado River and would draw additional freshwater from rivers that currently supply the Salton Sea. The Plan could also reduce the Sea's water

levels by as much as 22 feet, exposing up to one hundred additional square miles of lake bed. Although the Sea's large sport fishery is important to the local economy, the income is not sufficient alone to offset the increased desalinization costs. If proposed measures go forward, the fishery may collapse, closely followed by the lake's bird populations, which number in the millions. The Salton Sea provides a home to more than 100,000 wintering waterfowl and important populations of Eared Grebe, Brown Pelican, Red-necked Phalarope, and many other open water specialists. For more information visit: [www.saltonsea.ca.gov](http://www.saltonsea.ca.gov).

# Americas Most Important Bird Areas Identified, Mapped for the First Time

ABC has published a new map depicting America's Globally Important Bird Areas (IBAs), marking the first time that the most important places for birds in the U.S. have been formally recognized. The sites were identified by ABC, in consultation with hundreds of biologists and wildlife managers across the country over a period of several years. The map was produced in conjunction with the National Geographic Society and is being made available to the public for \$7.50, through American Birding Association Sales (<http://americanbirding.org/abasaales/>

ibamap.htm, tel: (800) 634 7736). The complete list of sites can be seen on ABC's web site at [www.abcbirds.org/iba/ibalist.htm](http://www.abcbirds.org/iba/ibalist.htm). The project is funded in part by The Nature Conservancy and the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund and has the support of a range of organizations including FWS and the Department of Defense, which



Excerpt from the new ABC Important Bird Areas map.

manage many of the lands identified as IBAs. Other partners in the IBA project include the American Birding Association, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), Partners in Flight, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, and the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan. Important Bird Areas are places that have concentrations of either endangered or declining birds, significant populations of birds with very small ranges, or large concentrations of migratory birds. The Important Bird Areas project seeks to raise awareness of the need to conserve these precious natural resources, and to ensure that the most important places for birds receive the full attention of conservation groups and agencies. Contact: Dr. Robert Chipley, ABC, <[rchipley@abcbirds.org](mailto:rchipley@abcbirds.org)>.

**ABC Members will receive a free copy of the map with the next issue of Bird Conservation magazine.**

**Join ABC or try our special free offer. Detach the form below, fill in your details and mail to: American Bird Conservancy, P.O. Box 249, The Plains, VA 20198.**

- Yes!* I want to support ABC. I will receive *Bird Conservation Magazine* four times a year and *Bird Calls* newsletter three times a year.
- I would like to try a free issue of *Bird Conservation Magazine* before committing to joining ABC.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Visa/MC: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Select a Membership Level\*\*

- \$40 Vireo
- \$100 Meadowlark\*
- \$250 Tanager
- \$500 Curlew
- \$1,000 Falcon Club
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify)

\* Supporters at the \$100 and above levels receive a copy of American Bird Conservancy's All the Birds of North America. The fair market value of this gift is \$19.95 and reduces your tax-deductible contribution by that amount. If you do not wish to receive this gift, please check here .

\*\*Amounts listed are in U.S. Dollars. Please make checks payable to American Bird Conservancy. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

