

Snowy Plover: Cary Smyle



The simple things you do every day, from the cup of coffee you drink in the morning to the lights you turn on at night, all have an impact on birds. As we human beings expand our presence on the earth, our lives intersect more and more with the wildlife around us. Our everyday activities increasingly erode their habitats, deplete their food supplies, and create new dangers for them to face. If we want to protect the birds around us and preserve their future, we need to begin to conduct our lives with a consciousness of how our actions affect the world around us; not only the people, but the wildlife, the air, the water, and the land.

The following are some steps that anyone can take to live cleaner, greener, and more bird friendly.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Laura Erickson, Binoculars.com



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TOP TEN TIPS

for

Bird-Friendly Living



Tree Swallow, Chickadees: Michael Strubblefield

ABC's Top Ten Tips for Bird-Friendly Living:

10 Plan your yard for diversity. Instead of a “green desert” of lawn of no benefit to wildlife, plant a mixture of native grasses, flowers, and shrubs. Use native species—birds like these best and they are best adapted to where you live. Your state or local Native Plant Society can help you choose species that will work best for you. When your wildlife garden is complete, you can have your yard certified by the National Wildlife Federation. You can also encourage your children to have their schoolyard certified! Visit www.nwf.org.



American Goldfinch: Bill Hubick

9 Provide birds with fresh food and clean water. Clean your feeders regularly to prevent mold and disease. Scrub them with a solution of 1/4 cup bleach to two gallons of water, and rinse well. Birds love water, and a bird bath can often attract species that wouldn't visit your feeder. Again, cleanliness is key; change the water every other day to keep it fresh and prevent mosquitoes from breeding. Visit www.backyardbirdcare.org for more details.

8 Prevent window strikes. Hundreds of millions of birds die each year as a result of hitting windows on every type of building. To reduce night lighting that interferes with migration, ask your office or apartment building manager to turn off exterior and interior lights during spring and fall migration. Place bird feeders within three feet of your windows. Move indoor plants far away from windows. Break up the reflections of habitat in your windows by covering the outside of them with taut screens, window film, or decals. See ABC's website for more information.

7 Donate your old binoculars to conservation. Have any old birding equipment just lying around, never being used? You can help our long-distance migrants and rare Latin American endemics by donating your old gear to biologists across the hemisphere through the Birders Exchange program. Visit the American Birding Association's Website at www.americanbirding.org/bex.

6 Take action for birds on ABC's website. As well as being the best place to learn all about bird conservation, ABC's Website is also the place to go to get directly involved in helping conserve wild birds. ABC action campaigns enable you to play a role in getting key bills passed in Congress, ensuring that the most harmful pesticides to birds and other wildlife are banned, and a host of other top issues. Visit www.abcbirds.org/action to see how you can take action today and make a difference for birds.

5 Drink shade-grown coffee. Coffee produced from shade-loving varieties means wintering habitat can be preserved for key migrant species such as the Cerulean Warbler. Companies such as Thanksgiving Coffee now provide a range of products to suit every palate, including Cerulean Warbler Conservation Coffee (<http://store.thanksgivingcoffee.com/abc>), proceeds from which help support conservation at bird reserves in Colombia. Ask your local grocery or coffee shop to stock a shade-grown alternative.



4 Reduce your carbon footprint. Do your part to help reduce our reliance on fossil fuels that cause global warming. Use an electric lawnmower; carpool, bicycle, or use public transport when possible; turn off lights when not in use; use low energy bulbs and Energy Star-rated appliances; call your power company and ask if you can buy your energy from renewable sources; help ABC buy forest that provides valuable habitat for birds, and helps lower atmospheric CO₂ levels.

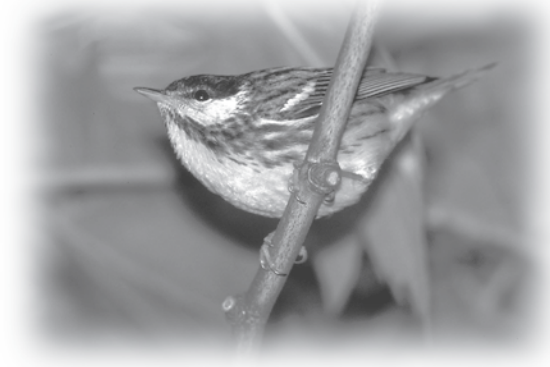
3 Reduce your use of pesticides. Not only can they be toxic to birds, but they kill the insects that birds eat. Weed instead of spraying! If you must use pesticides, look for biopesticide alternatives. Prevent pests from entering your home by replacing worn weather stripping and screens, and filling in gaps in floors and around windows and plumbing fixtures. For more information, visit ABC's Pesticides and Birds Campaign pages at www.abcbirds.org/pesticides.

2 Keep your cat indoors. Even well-fed, cats kill birds. Keep them inside, and not only will the birds be safer, your cat will be healthier and safer, too. For information on how to make your cat a happy indoor cat, local cat laws, and resources, visit www.abcbirds.org/cats.



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1 Join American Bird Conservancy. As individuals, there is only so much we can do for birds. But as a part of an organization with the expertise, broad reach, and partnership capacity of ABC, you can make a difference for wild birds and their habitats locally, nationally, and internationally. Join ABC today at www.abcbirds.org/membership.



Blackpoll Warbler: Michael Stubblefield