

Partners in Flight

Helping Species at Risk | Keeping Common Birds Common
Voluntary Partnerships for Birds, Habitats, and People



Partners in Flight Action Brief

113th Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting
Calgary, Alberta September 2023

The mission of Partners in Flight (PIF), a landbird conservation initiative created in 1990, is keeping common birds common and helping species at risk through voluntary partnerships. PIF's strategic goals – to maintain healthy landbird populations, keep species from becoming threatened or endangered, promote full life-cycle conservation of migratory birds, and promote the value of birds as indicators of environmental health and human well-being – are as relevant today as they were 33 years ago.

The PIF partnership greatly appreciates the support and leadership the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided from 2000 to 2022 by funding and housing the PIF U.S. Coordinator position. Given the current vacancy in the position due to budgetary constraints, the PIF Steering Committee strongly supports a timely replacement of the PIF U.S. Coordinator position, and the essential engagement of qualified interim detailees, to ensure a smooth and effective transition in PIF leadership and operations.

Current PIF direction is driven primarily by the PIF Landbird Conservation Plan, 2016 Revision for Canada and Continental United States, and the PIF Strategic Action Plan, updated in 2023. PIF also completed a retrospective and visioning exercise in 2023, to consider challenges and opportunities for landbird conservation in the coming decades.

Our current priorities activities, by PIF Committee or Working Group, include:

PIF Steering Committee:

- Facilitate efforts to fill the vacant permanent PIF U.S. Coordinator position within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Birds, or interim Detailee, to ensure stable leadership for the PIF partnership and landbird conservation initiative.
- Initiate conceptual development of the next PIF Landbird Conservation Plan revision, given the current plan's 10-year shelf life.

International PIF Science Committee:

- PIF Avian Conservation Assessment Database (ACAD) Updates: Nonbreeding assessment scores at the regional level, new percent-population-based area importance scores, and climate vulnerability threat scores
- Bird Conservation Region (BCR) Updates in Canada: Subdividing 4 largest BCRs in Canada and boundary adjustments in Quebec to facilitate identifying regional populations and conservation priorities. Proposed by PIF and adopted by Trilateral Migratory Birds Table in June 2023. The updated BCR map and associated shapefiles are available from Birds Canada.



- MAKING CONNECTIONS for Bird Conservation, 2nd Edition (August 2023): Update of Blancher et al. 2006 migratory connections maps using eBird Status and Trends, showing geographic connections to facilitate conservation efforts

Equitable Engagement Subcommittee:

- Supports fostering a culture of inclusivity and welcoming new partners from across the Western Hemisphere, evaluating barriers and considering opportunities to approach bird conservation from multiple perspectives
- Working to increasing relevancy and accessibility
- Providing translation for website, documents, meetings
- PIF Equitable Engagement Fellow, through American Bird Conservancy's Conservation and Justice Fellowship; seeking \$10,000 in partner support

Western Working Group:

- Fall Meeting (hybrid): Boise, Idaho week of October 30, 2023
- Species Working Groups: Western Hummingbird Partnership; Desert Thrasher; Pinyon Jay; Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Western Motus Network Initiative: Expanding along Western flyways
- Conservation Without Borders: Integrative approach to full-life cycle conservation of migratory birds; engaging new partners in Mexico and Central America to increase equitable engagement; supporting collaborative projects
- Western Forest Birds: To halt and reverse declines by informing active forest management

Eastern Working Group:

- Science Delivery: Identifying actions to improve eastern forest management outcomes, especially private; creating a Business Plan for eastern grassland birds; developing a database of habitat management guidelines for birds
- Full Annual Cycle Conservation: Nearing completion of Conservation Investment Strategies: Mid-Elevation Forests of Central and Northern South America; Lowland Tropical Forests of the Gulf-Caribbean Slope of Mesoamerica
- Stopover sites: Identifying potentially important migratory stopover sites in Canada and the U.S. through National Audubon Society and Birds Canada

PIF Awards Committee:

- Recognizing exceptional group/individual contributions to landbird conservation in the Americas since 1996; annual call for nominations in November 2023.

World Migratory Bird Day:

- Annual conservation theme [2023: Water; 2024: Declining insectivorous birds]
- Events second week of May and October, but can occur when appropriate
- America's Flyways: U.S., Canada, Caribbean, Mexico, Central/South America
- Educational and promotional materials in Spanish, French and Portuguese

For more information, contact Interim PIF U.S. Coordinator, Carol Beidleman (cbeidleman@environmentamericas.org) or PIF Canada Coordinator, Becky Stewart (Becky.Stewart@ec.gc.ca).