

Partners in Flight

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



Partners in Flight Action Brief

*116th Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting
Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA – September 14-18, 2026*

Overview

Partners in Flight (PIF) is a collaborative network of over 150 partner organizations dedicated to conserving land birds and their habitats. The partnership hatched in the early 1990s in response to widespread declines in Neotropical migratory land birds. Today, partners range from not-for-profit organizations working on the ground to conservation research-focused academics, to government agencies and funding institutions. To PIF, each partner brings their strengths, capacities, and expertise, thus enabling the partnership to achieve greater conservation outcomes of a larger scope and scale than any one partner could achieve on their own. Like our “shared” birds, PIF partners range from South to North America and many places in between.

PIF’s current direction is guided by the PIF Landbird Conservation Plan, 2016 Revision for Canada and the Continental United States. A priority is strengthening connections between PIF, the PIF Shorebird–Waterbird Subcommittee, State Flyways, and Habitat Joint Ventures to advance coordinated bird and habitat strategies.

PIF Committees and Working Groups: 2026 Progress and Priorities

Steering Committee

Co-chairs: Mike Green (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Becky Stewart (Canadian Wildlife Service)

- Budget Subcommittee
 - Determined funding priorities, developed informational 1-pagers for each to streamline documentation of PIF expenses, support new funding sources, and ensure recognition of existing funders.
 - See here for 1-pagers: <https://partnersinflight.org/resources/budget-priority-one-pagers/>
- Nominations Subcommittee
 - February 2026: Steering Committee adopted a Terms of Reference to bolster decision-making effectiveness, enhance transparency, clarify goals, and facilitate engagement of new partners.
 - September 2026: Call for nominees for Co-chairs for the Steering Committee’s inaugural Co-chair election.
- Communications and Engagement Subcommittees
 - Improving information about getting involved in PIF.
 - Content updates to the PIF website.
 - Developing outreach products for different audiences.
 - Meeting with partners to gather input.



International Science Committee

Co-chairs: Sarah Kendrick (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Alaine Camfield (Canadian Wildlife Service)

- A [peer-reviewed special feature](#) on PIF Science conservation tools is in progress at Avian Conservation and Ecology for publication in 2026. Six have been published to date, the rest of the manuscripts are in revision. Topics include:
 - History and next steps of PIF Science (Kendrick et al. 2026)
 - [Collaborative and inclusive science improves Neotropical bird conservation](#) (Gonzalez et al. 2026)
 - Evaluating progress toward the 2016 PIF Landbird Plan objectives (Perkins et al. 2026)
 - Refining population estimates for North American birds (Gahbauer et al. 2026)
 - Estimating species population size for woodpeckers (Gyug 2026)
 - Western forests data synthesis (Gillespie et al. 2026)
- An update to the [2016 Landbird Plan](#) is being drafted.
 - This update will be a technical update of population estimates for US and Canadian breeding birds, the ACAD's expansion from Canada through Panama, trends analysis, and full annual cycle tools and plans, including the Conservation Investment Strategy for Mid-elevation Forests of Central and South America - and much more!
 - This will not be a full replacement PIF Plan, but rather a technical update for partners to continue with avian conservation planning and to update on PIF science tools created since the 2016 Plan.

Migration Ecology Subcommittee

Co-chairs: Fabiola Rodríguez Vásquez (Cornell Lab of Ornithology), Maya Wilson (BirdsCaribbean), Anna Lello-Smith (Wildlife Conservation Society), Amie MacDonald (Birds Canada)

- Hosted two webinars since March 2026 that featured lightning talks by subcommittee members on their research. A goal of the lightning talks was to help members get to know each other and each other's work better, and to spark collaborations around migration ecology and tracking.
- Recordings of all subcommittee webinars since November 2024 are posted on the PIF YouTube channel in Spanish and English:
<https://www.youtube.com/@partnersinflight2025/videos>.
- Shared a [collaboration spreadsheet](#) designed to facilitate collaborative projects and knowledge sharing among members. The spreadsheet includes projects open to collaboration, funding opportunities, training opportunities, a resource list, and space for members to list their experience with tracking technologies that they are willing to share with others.
- Continued to [raise funds to support simultaneous English<->Spanish interpretation](#) for subcommittee meetings.
- Currently exploring member interests and capacity to identify potential collaborative projects that this subcommittee could facilitate. Potential projects could involve a coordinated field effort or leverage existing data to fill gaps in our understanding of migration ecology, especially for priority species and groups.



Western Working Group

Co-Chairs: Adam Brewerton (Utah Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife Resources), Erin Duvuvuei (New Mexico Department of Wildlife)

- Spring meeting was in Salt Lake City, Utah, April 20–24, which included a Road to Recovery Western Working Group Workshop to strengthen collaboration and recovery planning with Pinyon Jay, International Mountain Plover, Desert Thrasher, and Yellow-billed Magpie species working groups on April 20.
- Fall meeting will be in Reno, Nevada, November 16-19. Register and access the agenda here: <https://klamathbird.org/uncategorized/western-working-group-spring-registration/>

Conservation Without Borders

- Hosted a PIF symposium at the 2025 XXII Congress for the Study and Conservation of Birds in Mexico (Baja California), including a roundtable on careers in bird research and conservation and a symposium on PIF tools and Joint Ventures working internationally.
- Ongoing engagement with CIPAMEX led to an invitation to organize a two-hour PIF symposium at the 2026 International Ornithological Congress.

Species Working Groups

- **Desert Thrasher Working Group:** integrating thrasher protocols into the AKN; partners conducting surveys in AZ and NM; movement studies underway in AZ and NV.
- **Pinyon Jay Working Groups:** Several state/regional Pinyon Jay Working Groups are active and have collaborated to adopt a standardized protocol for clearance surveys and to finalize the steps necessary to upload data into AKN; multiple states continue to use the Survey Protocol for Landscape Applications. Additionally, members are working in an interagency team to draft a Rangewide Conservation Agreement and Strategy (CAS).

Eastern Working Group

Lead: Randy Dettmers (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

- The Eastern Working Group (EWG) held its annual meeting on August 3, 2026, in conjunction with the American Ornithological Society's annual conference (University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA) and resulted in a good combination of conservation practitioners and academics. Forty-two people attended the meeting in person, 15 of whom were new to the EWG and were primarily students or early career professionals. An additional 20 people attended virtually.
 - The session on reducing bird collisions with buildings and towers drew a lot of attention. The EWG is considering a more concerted and organized effort to contact tower owners about lighting retrofits and would be happy to collaborate with others on this topic.
 - The Eastern Grassland Bird Conservation Business Plan session led to refined focal areas in the Northeast and an outlined communications plan.

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- The Full Annual Cycle Conservation session presented examples of how local and regional projects link and contribute to the broader goals of full annual cycle initiatives. Participants were interested in linking efforts of multiple Migratory Bird Joint Ventures with the Conservation Investment Strategies for comprehensive full annual cycle conservation strategies.
- The EWG will continue working on its clearinghouse of beneficial bird-friendly habitat management plans and on organizing collaborative efforts to identify and manage important migratory stopover areas.

Industry Working Group

Chair: Angela Larsen-Gray (National Council for Air and Stream Improvement)

- Working group revitalized; first virtual meeting held to introduce PIF, learn about members, and identify next steps.
- Quarterly virtual meetings planned, each focused on a specific topic.
- Meeting topics have included eDNA research, the Wildlife Conservation Initiative (WCI), and opportunities for collaboration and engagement.
- Exploring additional entities that may be interested in joining the working group.

Department of War Partners in Flight

Coordinators: Elizabeth Neipert (US Army Engineer Research and Development Center), Jake Jung (US Army Engineer Research and Development Center)

- Research and Monitoring Working Group
 - ARUs - working with partners to establish the state of the science and develop better guidance for ARU use.
- Mission-Sensitive Species (MSS) Working Group
 - MSS are species with the highest potential to impact the military mission should they become Federally listed under the Endangered Species Act (<https://www.dodakn.org/resources/mss/>).
 - Re-evaluation of the Mission-Sensitive Species List and developing a repeatable process for making this list (*working with the Research and Monitoring Working Group on this initiative*).
- DOW PIF-wide
 - Other Working Groups are currently seeking out new DOW membership and subject matter expertise.



Awards Committee

Chair: Carol Beidleman

- Recognizing exceptional group and individual contributions to landbird conservation in the Americas since 1996.
- Award categories: Leadership, Investigations, Public Awareness, Stewardship, and the David N. Pashley Lifetime Achievement Award.
- The PIF Awards program was suspended for the 2025 cycle due to loss of funding, however we are pleased to announce the resumption of the PIF Awards for the 2026 awards cycle thanks to partner funding.
- An announcement about the 2026 PIF Awards nomination process will go to the PIF listservs and on the PIF website in November 2026.
- Past awardees: partnersinflight.org/award-winners

World Migratory Bird Day

Contact: Susan Bonfield (Environment for the Americas)

- PIF's flagship awareness-raising program, now in its 33rd year, is a call to action for the protection of shared migratory birds.
- 2027 Theme: in development now.
- 2026 Theme: Every Bird Counts – Your Observations Matter!
- Community science—including backyard bird counts and large-scale surveys—provides essential information on species distribution, abundance trends, migration timing, and breeding success. These data help identify conservation priorities and inform strategies.
- Events took place during the second week of May, and will take place during the second week of October 2026, with flexibility for local timing.
- Celebrated across the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and South America. Educational and promotional materials are available in multiple languages.
- More information: www.migratorybirdday.org

PIF Contact

For more information, contact:

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