



Inside Bird Conservation - June 2018

House Farm Bill Threatens Endangered Species and Public Lands

The U.S. House of Representative's Farm Bill, H.R. 2, was defeated 198-213, but it may be brought up again for a vote in June. The legislation contains numerous provisions disastrous to wildlife and public lands. The bill also proposes \$800 million in reduced funding for effective Farm Bill conservation programs including lower payments for Conservation Reserve Program contracts, which could further erode this program needed to conserve grassland habitats.

TAKE ACTION: [Please weigh in with your Representative and Senators](#) and ask that they pass a Farm Bill with full funding for conservation programs and none of the harmful provisions found in the House bill.

The [State of the Birds 2017 report](#) documents the many benefits that the Farm Bill—America's single-largest source of conservation funding for private lands—has delivered to birds, landowners, and rural communities. For more than three decades, the Farm Bill has been an effective tool for wildlife conservation, sustaining essential habitat for more than 100 bird species. Unfortunately, as a result of the many controversial provisions in the House bill, an extension of the current Farm Bill is more likely than passage of a new bill this year.

Twenty-nine Senators Urge a Farm Bill Free of Environmental Riders

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin and 28 of his colleagues are urging the leadership of the Senate Agriculture Committee to reject any efforts to politicize the upcoming Farm Bill. "For decades, the Farm Bill has provided comprehensive farm and food policy that is supported by members of both political parties. But increasingly, crucial must-pass bills are used as opportunities to attach environmentally harmful provisions that are incapable of passing on their own," [the senators wrote in their letter to Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow](#).

"We write to you to express our strong opposition to gutting bedrock U.S. environmental laws with provisions that threaten our air, water, lands, and wildlife. We urge you to bring forward a 2018 Farm Bill that is free of these ideological distractions," the senators added.

Conservation Coalition Opposes Endangered Species Pesticide Exemption in House Farm Bill

More than 250 conservation groups have [sent a letter to Congress](#) opposing a severe override of protections for endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act for pesticides registrations included in the House Farm Bill. Jamie Rappaport Clark, President and CEO of Defenders of

Wildlife, has published an opinion editorial further detailing problems in the bill, [Farm bill abandons endangered wildlife](#).

House Defense Bill Threatens Endangered Species Act, Sage Grouse, and Prairie Chickens

Provisions unrelated to national defense included in the National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 5515, pose a grave threat to two bird species: Greater Sage-Grouse and Lesser Prairie-Chicken. Both have suffered severe population declines and loss and degradation of their habitat. [Read more](#).

Scientists Tell Congress: Don't Strip Science Out of the Endangered Species Act

Nearly 1,500 scientists [sent a letter](#) to members of Congress on Endangered Species Day, urging them to oppose legislation that would weaken the role science plays in protecting endangered species and their ecosystems. Several bills have been introduced that would undercut the Endangered Species Act, including delisting species without a scientific basis, limiting the role of science in species protection, and cutting funding to limit protections for species at risk.

Congressman Lowenthal Introduces Bipartisan Bill to Protect Imperiled Seabirds

Congressman Alan Lowenthal (CA-47) joined with Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-08) and 11 House colleagues to introduce legislation that will protect imperiled seabirds from international fishing threats and increase ongoing conservation efforts in the United States and abroad. The Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act would implement the international Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), a conservation agreement that has been signed by 13 member countries since 2001.

“It is critical that the United States implement the ACAP, and in doing so encourage other nations to adopt strong conservation standards and take steps to ensure that foreign fishing vessels follow international conservation measures that protect endangered seabirds,” Congressman Lowenthal said. “I believe this is a perfect opportunity for our nation to not only resume leadership on the conservation issue, but improve wildlife conservation around the world.”

TAKE ACTION: Ask Congress to [support the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels](#).

Lawsuits Seek to Restore Protections for Migratory Birds

A coalition of national environmental groups, including American Bird Conservancy, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, filed litigation, *National Audubon Society v. Department of the Interior*, in the Southern District of New York challenging the current Administration's move to eliminate longstanding protections for waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). [Read our release](#).

TAKE ACTION: [Urge your Senators and Representative](#) to stand up for the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Other News

Hawaii Becomes First State in the U.S. to Ban the Toxic Pesticide Chlorpyrifos. Hawaii has become the first state in the U.S. to ban [chlorpyrifos](#), a neurotoxin that causes significant damage to brain development in children. The pesticide's detrimental health effects led the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Obama administration to propose banning all of its agricultural uses, but the EPA under the current administration reversed this pledge. The bill (SB3095) is a significant first step in protecting public health from pesticide harms for the state of Hawaii. SB3095 also requires all users of Restricted Use Pesticides (RUPs) to report usage of these [pesticides](#) and mandates minimum 100-foot no-spray zones for RUPs around schools during school hours.

A Champion for Flammulated Owls and Other Birds of the Pacific Northwest. Conservationist Bob Altman spent more than half of his 20 years at ABC working in ponderosa pine forests of the Pacific Northwest to restore habitat for *cavity-nesting birds* such as *Flammulated Owl* and *Lewis's Woodpecker*. By the time Altman retired in late 2017, ABC had collaborated with partner organizations and private landowners to conserve more than 32,000 acres of ponderosa pine habitat in Oregon. [Read more.](#)

Bald Eagle, the Ultimate Endangered Species Act Success Story. Bald Eagles were taken off the endangered species list in 2007. More than a decade later, where does the species stand? [Read more.](#)

Inside Bird Conservation is produced by American Bird Conservancy. Past editions and other issue updates are available on the [Bird Conservation Alliance website](#). Please forward to interested conservationists. To subscribe, please send a message to sholmer@abcbirds.org.