

THE PRIMARY SOURCE

Bird
Conservancy
of the Rockies

NEWSLETTER FOR BIRD CONSERVANCY OF THE ROCKIES | FALL/WINTER 2019 | NUMBER 55

Finding Your Flock at Bird Camps!

Campers can be themselves, make new friends and foster a love of nature and birds through shared experiences in the great outdoors

Our overnight campers come from across the country, drawn by a passion for birding and spending time in the great outdoors. **Taking Flight** (ages 12-14) and **On the Wing** (ages 15-17) are camps designed to get youth outside, and really fine-tune their observational skills with birds. We recently asked one of our campers who has been coming to us for 5 summers to share what she's learned about herself as she's gone through both our **Taking Flight** and **On The Wing** camps. This is her story.

"Until the moment all parents left on my first day of Taking Flight, I assumed that the greatest benefit of camp would be learning how to identify birds. Initially, I was very nervous about being around new people and experiencing an overnight camp for the first time. However, after lunch started, the counselors and returning campers began putting me at ease. I found it was easy to relax and talk to my fellow campers, to a degree I'd never experienced before. Throughout the following week and many ensuing years at camp, I've learned to engage fully in my interests and to be confident in my ability to make friends.



Ana Gijon Van Linden

As a self-identified nerd, it was challenging in elementary and middle school to find people who not only accepted my nerdiness but who encouraged or shared it. Taking Flight was the first place where I found people as intensely engaged in obscure activities as I was, encountering people even more passionate and driven than myself inspired me to be more confident and engaged in my hobbies and sparked a greater love for my interests. As I gained more self-confidence, I managed to seek out and make friends who didn't just tolerate my passions but embraced and shared them."

Bird Conservancy strives to make our camps a safe and welcoming experience for everyone. A space where you can geek out over birds, gain self-confidence, and make lifelong friendships along the way. Here's a few photos from this year's summer camps for your enjoyment!



On the Wing campers, Ana third from the right. Photo: Tyler Cash



Alan on the lookout for birds at Raptor Camp! Photo: Dave Neligh



Wild Nestlings campers (ages 4-5) had a blast exploring the water's edge at Barr Lake State Park. Photo: Stacey Monahan



All-Seasons Adventures

Save the date for these upcoming programs!

Birds of Winter Camp

Dec. 30-31, 2019 | Jan. 2-3, 2020

Explore what it takes for birds to survive the winter at Barr Lake. Campers will hone their birding skills along our local trails, discover what resources wintering birds need through fun and interactive activities, create bird-themed crafts, and much more!

Spring Migration Camp

March 23-27, 2020

As the birds prepare for spring migration we will learn why birds migrate back from their wintering grounds, and what it takes for them to survive. Campers will refine their birding skills along our local trails, learn what resources migrating birds need in order to survive through fun and interactive games, and much more! Come and make a new flock of friends at bird camp!

Volunteer Bird Walks

Monday, Sept. 23 | 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Monday, Nov. 25 | 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Join us for a relaxing, fun bird walk to meet other volunteers and staff. We'll meet at the Environmental Learning Center (14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton). Please dress for the weather and bring a water bottle and binoculars.

Register online at
birdconservancy.org/register

Great Horned Owl photo by Stacey Monahan



THE PRIMARY SOURCE

The Primary Source is the member newsletter of Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

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The Primary Source refers to a bird's primary feathers which power its flight. You, our members, Friends, volunteers and partners are the primary source of Bird Conservancy's power to accomplish its mission to conserve birds and their habitats.

Editing and design:

William Bevil, Communications Manager

Go Paperless

If you prefer to receive an electronic-only version of this newsletter, please email sarah.burnett@birdconservancy.org to update your subscription preferences.



Advertise in The Primary Source

Looking to promote your business and help conserve birds and their habitats? Ad rates start at just \$50 with distribution to over 500 Friends, supporters, volunteers and! For more info: info@birdconservancy.org

Hard to believe 20 years ago I was standing outside what was then Colorado Bird Observatory's trailer, looking out across the prairie and identifying a Ferruginous Hawk with the founding director, Mike Carter. Luckily, that interview turned into a job offer and I became the Prairie Partners Coordinator for Wyoming and Geographic Information Specialist for the organization.

Fast-forward over my 20-year tenure. Thousands of miles logged, thousands of grassland birds surveyed, hundreds of landowners engaged and thousands of acres of private land enhanced for birds and other wildlife—while also supporting productive lands for agriculture. The milestones included moving from a trailer to the Old Stone House at Barr Lake; establishing a satellite office in Fort Collins; expansion to western Nebraska; to the transition of our headquarters at Barr Lake State Park and creation of an Environmental Learning Center, which each year serves as an inspiration point to nature for thousands of Denver-metro residents.

What does the future hold?

Opportunities ahead include building our partnerships and reach in Fort Collins and expanding our inspiration point concept across the Front Range. Bringing together a collaborative of scientists and leaders, we're charting a course for healthy grasslands to support our agricultural and natural heritage for current and future generations. The **Birds Forever Endowment Fund**, our first-ever endowment for Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, ensures our efforts continue for decades to come.

The future means meeting people where they are on life's journey. That may be a four-year old at her first camp; teenagers contemplating what they want to be when they grow up; a retired teacher sharing their passion for learning and science; a landowner wanting to grow their stewardship ethic. Nature, birds and conservation enhance our sense of place and inspire positive contributions to our communities. Along the way, people of all ages gain a lifelong appreciation for the natural world and a better understanding of their role in taking care of it.

If you have been with us on this journey, we thank you! If you are looking for a new way to make a positive difference for people, birds and the land, please join us and support our future.

We all have the capacity to make a positive difference—*let us inspire you!*

Tammy VerCauteren
Executive Director





AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY 2019 ANCHORAGE ALASKA

Sharing ideas, sparking conversations

This summer, over 700 students and professionals from all aspects of ornithology and from across North America traveled to Anchorage, Alaska to attend the 137th annual meeting of the American Ornithological Society. Attendees made the most of the meeting—and perpetual daylight—by attending workshops, field trips, social events, and scientific presentations, which covered topics spanning genetics, population biology, behavior, management and conservation, taxonomy, climate change, breeding biology, analytical methods, evolution, human dimensions, and physiology.

Quresh Latif from Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, along with Jonathon Valente from the Smithsonian Institute's Migratory Bird Center, chaired a symposium at the meeting entitled, "Counting unmarked birds: matching appropriate sampling and modeling techniques with particular research questions." This series of talks reviewed and discussed how to design monitoring programs and analyze data to better estimate and understand bird abundance, distributions, and the factors influencing them—and how to use this information to inform conservation and land management.

Sixteen presenters from 13 academic and non-profit organizations and governmental agencies shared their research on cutting-edge analytical methods for understanding bird populations. Topics included robust monitoring program design, assumptions and potential biases in population data, sampling efficiencies, population dynamics, collecting data on rare species, making the most of citizen science data, contribution of management practices to regional bird populations, and combining multiple data sets.

Bird Conservancy biometricians Adam Green, Quresh Latif, and David Pavlacky highlighted how the **Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions (IMBCR)** program facilitates scientifically rigorous information for managing and conserving bird populations, communities, and habitats. Symposium chairs and presenters discussed plans to collaboratively produce a peer-reviewed journal article that synthesizes ideas presented and provides guidance for designing surveys tailored to specific research questions while bearing in mind available analytical tools.

Advancing knowledge through science

Bird Conservancy's research and monitoring programs provide a foundation for our land stewardship and habitat conservation efforts, inspiration for our educational programs, and reliable resources for partners and stakeholders. Together, we are filling knowledge gaps that inform bird conservation where it's needed most.



Lesser prairie-chicken | Photo: J.N. Stuart

SCIENCE to SOLUTIONS

A new study done in partnership with NRCS/CEAP Wildlife and Playa Lakes Joint Venture highlights population benefits for many species of songbirds that use prairie habitat alongside Lesser Prairie-Chickens.

Researchers monitored birds on ranches that had implemented conservation practices in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas from 2015 to 2017.

Grasshopper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark and Cassin's Sparrow were among the songbirds evaluated in the research.

The key take away from the study?

Conservation practices contributed to an increase of 2.4 million songbirds across the region!

"Livestock grazing is compatible with maintaining healthy grasslands, as demonstrated by the variety and abundance of birds on well-managed ranch lands." ~ David Pavlacky, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, lead author on the study.

This research highlights how conserving lands for Lesser Prairie-Chickens sets the stage for increased population levels of multiple bird species, including other grassland bird species, while also improving the productivity of grasslands for ranchers. That's win-win conservation at its best!

The full **Science to Solutions** report is available for download here: birdconservancy.org/LPCI2019

OUR MISSION

Conserving birds and their habitats through science, education and land stewardship

OUR VISION

A world where birds are forever abundant, contributing to healthy landscapes and inspiring human curiosity and love of nature.

OUR APPROACH

Our mission is advanced through sound science, achieved through empowering people, realized through stewardship and sustained through partnerships.

Our work radiates from the Rockies to the Great Plains, Mexico and beyond.

Together, we are improving native bird populations, the land and the lives of people.

Connect with Us

For the latest on our upcoming events, visit www.birdconservancy.org, sign up for our e-newsletter on our website or become a fan of Bird Conservancy of the Rockies on Facebook.

 **Facebook**
www.facebook.com/birdconservancy

 **Twitter**
[@BirdConservancy](https://twitter.com/BirdConservancy)

 **YouTube**
Search: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

 **Instagram**
[@birdconservancyrockies](https://www.instagram.com/birdconservancyrockies)

Get the Full Story

Bird Conservancy's blog is the place to go for news and information about Bird Conservancy's migratory milestones and the positive impacts we are having on bird conservation efforts across the West.

birdconservancy.org/stories

Put Down Your Checkbook!



Did you know that making a cash gift to Bird Conservancy might not be the best financial option for you? There may be tax benefits if you consider these other ways to support Bird Conservancy of the Rockies.

IRA CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION

You can make an IRA Charitable Rollover Gift to help Bird Conservancy this year! Are you 70 ½ or older? If so, you can give up to \$100,000 per calendar year through your IRA.

Your gift must be complete on or before December 31.

Distributions must be made directly from your IRA to Bird Conservancy. Do not withdraw the funds yourself and pass them on to Bird Conservancy or your gift will not qualify for the IRA Charitable Rollover and will be included in your taxable income.

Advantages:

- You can count your gift towards your annual required minimum distribution
- Your distribution is not recognized as income on your federal tax return. (Note you cannot take a federal income tax charitable deduction for your gift).
- Keeping your IRA distribution out of your adjusted gross income may save you taxes. (Be sure to consult your tax advisor).
- The transfer process is quick and requires minimal paperwork.
- You can help Bird Conservancy conserve birds and their habitats!

TAKING STOCK

Have you considered giving a gift of stock or mutual fund? Your gift of appreciated assets can provide an income tax deduction at fair market value and can avoid capital gains tax. Be sure to check with your tax advisor to see how this can benefit you.

BEATERS FOR TWEETERS

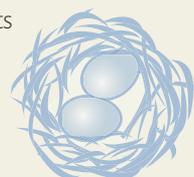
Is it time to say goodbye to that old vehicle, RV, tractor or plane just sitting around?



By donating your used vehicle to Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, you can take advantage of a charitable gift deduction, support Bird Conservancy and get rid of your unwanted vehicle – all at the same time! Simply visit CharityDispatch.com or call the 24/7 toll free vehicle donation line at (866) 829-2918 to schedule your vehicle donation.

To make an IRA Charitable Rollover Gift, stock or appreciated assets or vehicle donation before December 31, contact:

Kelli Hirsch, Development Manager
14500 Lark Bunting Lane | Brighton, CO 80603
(303) 659-4348 ext. 12 | kelli.hirsch@birdconservancy.org



You can also make a donation online at www.birdconservancy.org/donate



Who's Counting?

Bird monitoring informs land stewardship

by Kaitlyn Nafziger, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist (Clayton, NM)

It was 5 a.m. and pitch black on the cool, crisp April morning. I groggily waited for my coffee to boil. I added a few more layers, grabbed my backpack and headlamp and made my way down to meet up with the rest of the group. Not the typical start to my work day, but for that week I ditched the office to attend the Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions (IMBCR) point count training in Wichita National Wildlife Refuge, Oklahoma.



Not a bad day at the office! Photo: Kaitlyn Nafziger

I arrived at the training thinking I was relatively familiar with some of the birds in the region and was excited for a week of camping and birding. I glanced over the protocols ahead of time and thought “record birds, time, distances, and vegetation – how hard can this be?” After all, I had experience with bird identification and other wildlife field practices before I joined Bird Conservancy as a Private Lands Wildlife Biologist (PLWB).

But—when I attempted my first point count and tried to pinpoint every bird that was attempting to out-sing its neighbor at the same time, I realized it was *much* more challenging than I anticipated! Being able to identify every bird, remembering all of the shorthand codes (there are pages!), and writing legibly, in just six minutes per count was overwhelming! It took the entire week of training as well as shadowing a few IMBCR technicians in my area before I really started to feel comfortable with the protocol.

Still, I enjoyed the challenge and learning from my peers.

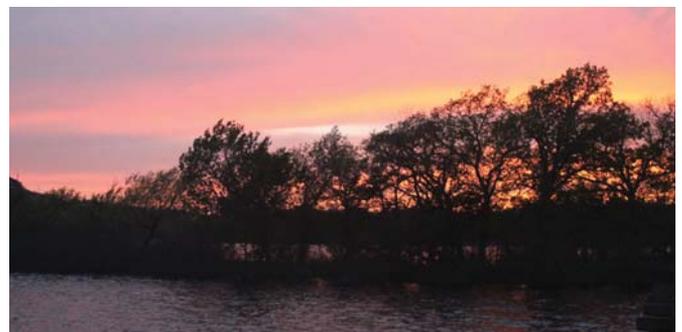
My attendance at the training is part of Bird Conservancy's larger plan to achieve more cross-collaboration between the science and stewardship program areas. The IMBCR program collects valuable data that can be used to evaluate bird response to land management actions which, in turn, informs and guide conservation planning to benefit birds.



An intense six minutes of listening and looking. Photo: Kaitlyn Nafziger

The stewardship team is currently developing our own protocol for doing “ranch reports” for private landowners which includes vegetative, bird and soil surveys. These reports provide baseline conditions of the ranch and guidance on how a ranch can be managed to achieve both the landowner goals and a healthier landscape for birds.

Where I work in northeastern New Mexico, the majority of grassland habitat is privately owned. Farmers and ranchers depend on the land to support their way of life. As a PLWB, I work with them to implement conservation plans to maintain and improve this habitat type. What I learned in the IMBCR protocol training I can now use to better service landowners. I can show landowners how they can use bird species to be indicators of a healthy ecosystem and evaluate the effectiveness of management practices at achieving our collective goals.



Sunset at our beautiful training ground. Photo: Kaitlyn Nafziger



UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Pre-registration is required for all camps and educational programs.

HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Homeschool programs are designed for multiple ages and ability levels and vary by program. We encourage older participants to be positive role models and mentors to younger students throughout all of the activities.

For a complete list of upcoming programs, visit birdconservancy.org/homeschool

SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS & CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies offers programs for schools in the field at our Environmental Learning Center at Barr Lake State Park in Brighton, Colorado, and in the school's classroom. Scholarships are available to assist with bus and program fees. Apply online at birdconservancy.org/scholarships.

For a complete list of upcoming programs, visit birdconservancy.org/school_programs

Register online at birdconservancy.org/register

Colorado educational programs made possible with generous support from



NEBRASKA PROGRAMS

We reach 1-in-3 students in the Nebraska Panhandle with year-round environmental educational programs and outreach events. Bird Banding Station Field Trips, After School Nature Clubs, Family Nature Nights, State Park Bioblitzes, Environmental Service Learning Programs, Early Childhood Programs, Teacher Training Workshops, and other community events and school programs. For a complete list of upcoming programs, visit birdconservancy.org/nebraska_programs

Nebraska educational programs made possible with generous support from



VOLUNTEER!



Are you passionate about connecting others with nature and science? Be part of the solution for conservation! We are still accepting Education Volunteers to assist with field trips, in-class programs and events in the Denver area.

Registration is required for all volunteer trainings and events. For more information or to register for any of the volunteer programs listed below, please contact:

Kelsey Mazur (Program & Volunteer Coordinator)
(303) 659-4348 x10
kelsey.mazur@birdconservancy.org

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER EVENTS:

Volunteer Work Day & Open House
Saturday, Oct. 26 | 9-11:00 a.m. from 9-11:00 a.m.

Join us for our bi-monthly Volunteer Work Day & Open House! We will be landscaping, gardening, and doing maintenance projects as well as talking about other ways to get involved. Volunteers of all ages welcome. Coffee and snacks provided.

Education Volunteer Training: In-Class Programs

Friday, Nov. 15 | 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Join us at this training to learn about our in-class programs, the curriculums, teaching strategies, and how to become an in-class program leader. This training is for new volunteers, but also recommended as a refresher for returning volunteers. No prior teaching experience necessary; training is provided.

Bimonthly Volunteer Gathering & Bird Walk

Monday, Sept. 23 | 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Monday, Nov. 25 | 9-10:00 a.m.

Join us for a relaxing, fun bird walk to meet other volunteers and staff. We'll meet at the Environmental Learning Center (14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton). Please dress for the weather and bring a water bottle and binoculars.



Welcome to our new Staff & Board!

Taylor Scherr

Private Lands Wildlife Biologist

Originally from Mandan, ND, Taylor earned her degree in Wildlife Biology at the University of Montana. Fieldwork in western Wyoming sparked an interest in applied ecology and a collaborative approach to research and conservation. Based in Glendive, MT, Taylor works with private landowners to build partnerships and conserve habitat for wildlife.



Chaley Jensen

NE Wildlife Education Coordinator

Chaley grew up in rural Nebraska exploring the woods and rivers of her home state. She received her Bachelor's in Biology from the University of Northern Iowa. Chaley leads Bird Conservancy's diverse environmental education, experiential and outreach programs across the panhandle of Nebraska.



Garth Spellman, Ph.D Board Member

As Curator of Ornithology at Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Dr. Garth Spellman's research focuses on how recent and ancient environmental changes have affected birds species. Garth has been frequent collaborator on many projects including the DMNS speaker series, educational programs, Neighborhood Nestwatch, and Brown-capped Rosy Finch research in Colorado.

Farewells: Jacy Bernath-Plaisted, Adam Beh



Visit a BIRD BANDING STATION!

The annual fall bird migration is getting underway as birds head south for the winter! Visit one of our fall banding stations for a chance to see live birds up close and wish them well on their journey!

Bird Conservancy operates banding stations each fall in Colorado, Nebraska and the Dakotas. Hours of operation vary and are subject to weather conditions. Individual visitors and group/school visits are welcome. Registration is recommended or required for all stations; see below for details.

COLORADO STATIONS

Barr Lake Banding Station

Barr Lake State Park

Aug 24 - Oct 13 | 7-11:30 a.m.

Closed Mondays.

Registration not required for individuals.

Pre-registration is required for groups

over 10 people. Register online at

birdconservancy.org/register

Chico Basin Ranch Banding Station

Sept. 2 - Oct 4 | 7-11:30 a.m.

Monday - Saturday

Operated in partnership with Chico Basin Ranch. Reservations required. To schedule a visit, call (719) 683-7960.

Grand Junction Banding Station

James M Robb Colorado River State Park

Sept 16 - Oct 11 (Closed weekends)

Reservations required. To schedule a visit, email catwood814@gmail.com

Ridgway Banding Station

Ridgway State Park

September 3-13 (Closed weekends)

Operated in partnership with Black Canyon Audubon Society and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. To schedule a program/visit, email ridgway.naturalist@state.co.us

Roger's Grove Banding Station

Rogers Grove Park (Longmont)

Every Tues and Thurs, Sept. 3 - Oct. 10,

EXCEPT Sep 24 and 26. | 7-11 a.m.

For group visits, contact:

kelsey.mazur@birdconservancy.org



NEBRASKA STATIONS

Chadron Banding Station

Chadron State Park

Tues-Sat. | Aug 28 - Oct 11

Wildcat Hills Banding Station

Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area

Tues-Sat. | Aug 28 - Oct 11

For group visits, contact:

chaley.jensen@birdconservancy.org

DAKOTAS STATIONS (owl banding)

Start at sunset and run approx. four hours.

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

T. R. National Park (North Dakota)

October 4-27 | Closed on Wednesdays

Reservations required. To schedule a visit, contact nancy.drilling@birdconservancy.org

Black Hills Banding Station

T. R. National Park (South Dakota)

Sept 27 - Nov 8

Reservations required. To schedule a visit, contact nancy.drilling@birdconservancy.org

To learn more, visit birdconservancy.org/birdbanding



Photo by Ryan Parker

On the cover: **Scaled Quail** (*Callipepla squamata*) Scaled Quail get their name from the scaly patterns on the breast and back feathers. This popular game species is found in aridlands across the Southwest, from southern Colorado to New Mexico, down to central Mexico. Their flocks, called *coveys*, may have up to 30 birds. They feed on seeds, fruit, leaves and insects. Scaled Quail are common throughout their range and considered a species of Least Concern on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

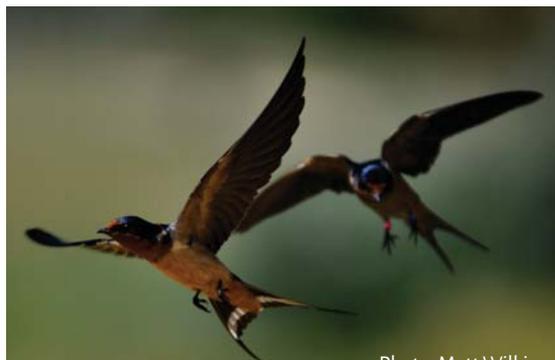


Photo: Matt Wilkins

FALL SPEAKER SERIES

Exploring new ideas and cutting-edge science by leaders in the field of ornithology.

presented in partnership with



Oct. 22, 2019 | 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Rebecca Safran

Associate Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado.



Barn swallows are one of the most widely distributed vertebrates on Earth. With six different subspecies, these birds provide an exciting opportunity to study environmental adaptation, including to the built environment of our own species. Dr. Rebecca Safran will share insights from her group's work on barn swallows along the Front Range and around the world. These investigations show how behaviors related to migratory and mate selection shape population boundaries, leading to more understanding of the origin and breakdown of biodiversity.

Promotional support provided by



\$12 Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Audubon and DMNS members, \$15 nonmember

For more information or to purchase tickets: <https://secure1.dmns.org/barn-swallows-and-biodiversity>



Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
 14500 Lark Bunting Lane
 Brighton, CO 80603
www.birdconservancy.org



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The Primary Source No. 55 - Fall/Winter 2019

YOU make a difference for birds & their habitats!

Thank You for
Chipping In!



Make a secure donation at www.birdconservancy.org/donate
 Donate or send your gift of support to celebrate our first 30 years and beyond.

Your gift can help:

- \$50 to support our Environmental Learning Center
- \$100 bring science & nature to people of all ages
- \$250 ensure healthy landscapes and communities
- \$500 to help unlock migratory mysteries
- Birds Forever Endowment Fund: _____
- Count on me for a monthly gift!
- I have included Bird Conservancy in my estate plans
- Please contact me about including Bird Conservancy in my estate plans
- Other: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ / _____ / _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
 Your gift is tax deductible.

Please mail to:
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PS55

THANK YOU for supporting bird and habitat conservation!