

SPECIES OF CONTINENTAL CONCERN

With nearly 450 breeding landbirds in the U.S. and Canada, and limited resources for conservation of terrestrial habitats, identifying the species most in need of conservation action is the key to efficient and effective bird conservation at multiple scales. Our primary tool for identifying the highest-concern species is the Partners in Flight (PIF) [Species Assessment Process](#).

The PIF Watch List identifies 86 species—these are the species of highest conservation concern at the continental (range-wide) scale (Table 1). Some of these species are already recognized as federally threatened or endangered in the U.S. and Canada. The Watch List fosters proactive conservation that will help recover populations of the most at-risk species and keep the remaining species from becoming endangered. Refer to Watch List Table at a Glance on page 5 for definitions of table headings.

The primary purpose of the PIF Watch List is to foster proactive attention to the conservation needs of the continent's most vulnerable landbird species.



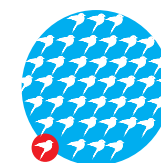
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Proactive and voluntary conservation measures by industry, agency, and non-governmental organization partners helped to preclude the need for federal listing of the Cerulean Warbler in the United States. The Cerulean Warbler Technical Group has served as a model for other, similar working group partnerships focused on conservation of high-priority and declining species.

WATCH LIST TABLE AT A GLANCE

VULNERABILITY FACTORS

PIF scores the relative vulnerability of all landbirds according to the following six factors. Scores for each factor range from 5 to 1 (high to low). See pages 96-101 for more details on PIF Science Based Approach. Appendix A contains assessment scores for all landbirds. The color-coded columns following the species names in Table 1 indicate each species' scores for the six factors:



POPULATION SIZE (PS)

Total number of adult individuals in the global population. Small populations have higher vulnerability.



THREATS BREEDING (TB)

Effects of current and probable future conditions that threaten a species' ability to survive and reproduce in its breeding areas.



BREEDING DISTRIBUTION (BD)

Geographic extent of a species' breeding range. Restricted breeding ranges have higher vulnerability.



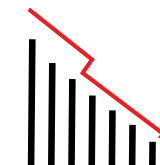
THREATS NON-BREEDING (TN)

Effects of current and probable future conditions that threaten a species' ability to survive during the non-breeding season.



NON-BREEDING DISTRIBUTION (ND)

Geographic extent of a species' non-breeding range. Restricted non-breeding ranges have higher vulnerability.



POPULATION TREND (PT)

Direction and magnitude of long-term changes in population size. Species with long-term population loss of at least 50% are considered most vulnerable.

LOSS

Percentage of global population lost over the past 44 years (1970-2014).

URGENCY/HALF-LIFE

Estimated number of years until an additional 50% of the global population is lost (i.e., a species' "half-life") if current population trends (past 10 years) continue into the future. Blank entries indicate insufficient data to calculate an estimate. An * next to a number indicates a confidence interval of >40 years around the estimate.

CONTINENTAL THREATS

Major threats affecting each species presented in order of severity. See the Continental Threats section for more details and Figure 3, page 14 for a key to abbreviations.

REGIONS OF HIGHEST IMPORTANCE: BREEDING, WINTER

Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs identified by number on page 116) or wintering geographic areas where each species occurs in high relative abundance during each season. **MX-B** = Mexico - Arid Baja (BCRs 40-42, 62-63); **MX-C** = Mexico - Caribbean Lowlands (BCRs 49, 52, 55-57, 64-66); **MX-H** = Mexico - Highlands (BCRs 46-48, 51, 53-54, 58, 60); **MX-P** = Mexico - Pacific Lowlands (BCRs 38, 43-45, 50, 59, 61); **BS** = Bahamas, Turks and Caicos; **CU** = Cuba, Jamaica, Cayman Islands; **Hisp** = Haiti, Dominican Republic; **BZ** = Belize; **GT** = Guatemala; **HN** = Honduras; **NI** = Nicaragua, El Salvador; **CR** = Costa Rica; **PA** = Panama; **CO** = Colombia; **VE** = Venezuela, Aruba, French Guiana, Guyana, Netherlands Antilles, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago; **EC** = Ecuador; **BR** = Brazil; **BO** = Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay.

PRIMARY BREEDING HABITAT

Primary habitat type in which each species is found during the breeding season, based on categories used in the [Species Assessment Database](#).

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Table 1. PIF WATCH LIST FOR CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Species	Vulnerability Factors					Loss	Urgency/ Half-Life (years)	Continental Threat	Regions of Highest Importance		Primary Breeding Habitat
	PS	Distribution		Threats					Breeding	Wintering	
		BD	ND	TB	TN						
RECOVER: Red Watch List - Species with extremely high vulnerability due to small population and range, high threats, and rangewide declines (19 species)											
Gunnison Sage-Grouse						> 50%		R, E, CI, U, D	16	16	Sagebrush
Lesser Prairie-Chicken						> 50%		A, R, E, CI	18, 19	18, 19	Grassland
California Condor						> 50%		Co, D, E	32, 16	32, 16	Chaparral
Red-cockaded Woodpecker						79%	38*	F	27, 25	27, 25	Eastern Forest
Ivory-billed Woodpecker						uncertain		F, U	27, 25, 26, 31	27, 25, 26, 31	Eastern Forest
Red-crowned Parrot						> 50%		H, T	36	36	Tropical Dry Forest
Black-capped Vireo						15-50%		R, U	35, 20	MX-P	Desert Scrub
Florida Scrub-Jay						> 50%		U, A, D	31	31	Eastern Forest
Bicknell's Thrush						15-50%		T, F, CI	14	Hisp	Boreal Forest
Bendire's Thrasher						86%	18	R, A, U, E, CI	33, 16	33	Desert Scrub
Le Conte's Thrasher						67%	27	R, A, U, E, CI	33	33	Desert Scrub
Bachman's Warbler						uncertain		F	27, 25, 26	CU	Eastern Forest
Golden-winged Warbler						60%	34*	F, T, U	12, 23, 28	CR, PA, HN, NI	Eastern Forest
Golden-cheeked Warbler						> 50%		T, F, U	20	NI, HN, MX-H	Western Forest
Bachman's Sparrow						72%	24	F	27, 31	27, 31	Eastern Forest
Saltmarsh Sparrow						94%		CI, U	30	27, 30	Coastal Saltmarsh
Tricolored Blackbird						> 50%	> 50	A	32	32	Wetland
Black Rosy-Finch						95%		CI	10, 9	16	Alpine Tundra
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch						95%		CI	16	16	Alpine Tundra
PREVENT DECLINE: "R" Yellow Watch List - Species not declining but vulnerable due to small range or population and moderate threats (12 species)											
Flammulated Owl						uncertain		F, CI, U	34, 16, 10		Western Forest
Lucifer Hummingbird						uncertain		CI	35	MX-H; MX-P	Desert Scrub
Gray Vireo						none	> 50	T, F, D	16, 34	MX-B	Western Forest
Island Scrub-Jay						uncertain		F, D	32	32	Western Forest
California Gnatcatcher						uncertain		U	32	32	Chaparral
McKay's Bunting						uncertain		CI	1	1	Arctic Tundra
Colima Warbler						uncertain		F	35	Mx-H	Mexican Pine Oak
Kirtland's Warbler						none		T, F	12	BS	Eastern Forest
Henslow's Sparrow						uncertain	> 50	A, U	24, 22	25, 26, 27	Grassland
Nelson's Sparrow						uncertain	> 50	CI, A, U	7, 11, 6, (14)	37, 27	Wetland
Seaside Sparrow						none	> 50	CI, U	37, 30, 27	37, 27	Coastal Saltmarsh
Audubon's Oriole						uncertain		F	36	36	Tropical Dry Forest
REVERSE DECLINE: "D" Yellow Watch List - Species with population declines and moderate to high threats (55 species)											
Mountain Quail						19%	> 50	CI, F	32, 15, 5	32, 15, 5	Western Forest
Scaled Quail						67%	8	R, A, CI	35, 18	35, 18	Desert Scrub
Greater Sage-Grouse						67%	> 50	E, R, D, A, CI, I	10, 17, 9	10, 17, 9	Sagebrush
Sooty Grouse						52%	> 50	F	5	5	Western Forest
Greater Prairie-Chicken						> 50%	> 50	A, E, R, I, H	19	19	Grassland
White-crowned Pigeon						15-50%		T, H	31	31	Mangrove
Band-tailed Pigeon						60%	> 50	F, T	5, 32, 34	CO	Western Forest
Mangrove Cuckoo						15-50%		U, T	31		Mangrove
Black-billed Cuckoo						66%	37*	T, F, U	12, 13, 23, 28	VE, MX-P, EC	Eastern Forest
Whiskered Screech-Owl						15-50%		F, U, CI	34	34	Mexican Pine Oak

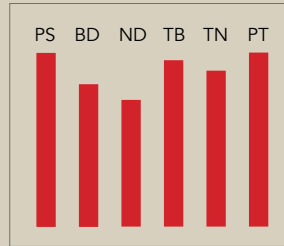
SEE WATCH LIST TABLE AT A GLANCE FOR DEFINITIONS (page 5)

Species	Vulnerability Factors					Loss	Urgency/ Half-Life (years)	Continental Threat	Regions of Highest Importance		Primary Breeding Habitat
	PS	Distribution		Threats					Breeding	Wintering	
		BD	ND	TB	TN						
Snowy Owl						64%		CI	3	11	Arctic Tundra
Spotted Owl						15-50%		F, CI	34, 5, 32, 15	34, 5, 32, 15	Western Forest
Long-eared Owl						91%		F, U	(widespread)	22, 35, 33, 18, 9, 34, 15	Forest Generalist
Eastern Whip-poor-will						67%		F, T, Co, U, CI	24, 29, 27, 25	31, NI	Eastern Forest
Mexican Whip-poor-will						15-50%		T, F, Co, CI	34	MX-H; GT	Mexican Pine Oak
Black Swift						94%	16	CI	5, 10	BR	Western Forest
Rufous Hummingbird						60%	34	CI, F	5	26, 37, 36	Western Forest
Allen's Hummingbird						83%	17	CI, U	32, 5	32	Chaparral
Elegant Trogon						15-50%		T, F	34	MX-P; MX-H	Mexican Pine Oak
Lewis's Woodpecker						67%	> 50	F, CI	9, 16	32, 15, 16, 34	Western Forest
Red-headed Woodpecker						68%	> 50	F, U	22, 19, 27, 26, 24	26, 27, 25, 24	Eastern Forest
Arizona Woodpecker						15-50%		T, F, CI	34	34	Mexican Pine Oak
Gilded Flicker						58%	33	R, U	33	33	Desert Scrub
Green Parakeet						15-50%		T, H	36	36	Tropical Dry Forest
Olive-sided Flycatcher						78%	24	T, F, CI	4, 10, 5	CO, EC, VE	Boreal Forest
Pinyon Jay						84%	19	F, R	16, 9	16, 9	Western Forest
Yellow-billed Magpie						49%	11	D	32	32	Western Forest
Chestnut-backed Chickadee						51%	46	F, U	5	5	Western Forest
Mexican Chickadee						15-50%		F	34		Mexican Pine Oak
Oak Titmouse						53%	40	F, U	32	32	Western Forest
Black-capped Gnatcatcher						15-50%		A, R, U	34	34	Desert Scrub
Wrentit						24%	> 50	U	32, 15	32, 15	Chaparral
Wood Thrush						59%	31	F, T, U, E, I	28, 29, 27, 24, 13	BZ, GT, HN, MX-C	Eastern Forest
California Thrasher						58%	34	U	32	32	Chaparral
Sprague's Pipit						73%	27	A, R, E, I	11	36, 37, 35, 21, 34	Grassland
Chestnut-collared Longspur						85%	21	A, R, E, I	11, 17	35, 34	Grassland
McCown's Longspur						86%	> 50	A, R, E, I	11, 18, 17, 10	35, 21, 18, 34, 19	Grassland
Prothonotary Warbler						34%	> 50	T, U, F	26, 27	PA, CR	Eastern Forest
Virginia's Warbler						38%	> 50	T, F, U	16, 34	Mx-P	Western Forest
Connecticut Warbler						51%	> 50	T, F	6, 8, 12	CO	Boreal Forest
Kentucky Warbler						25%	> 50	T, F, U	24, 25, 27, 28	BZ, GT, HN, MX-C	Eastern Forest
Cape May Warbler						79%	> 50	T, F	8, 6, 12, 7	Hisp, BS, CU	Boreal Forest
Cerulean Warbler						73%	26	T, F, E, U	28	CO	Eastern Forest
Prairie Warbler						54%	> 50	T, F, U	27, 29, 28, 24, 25	BS, CU, Hisp	Eastern Forest
Grace's Warbler						52%	> 50	T, F, CI	34, 16	BZ, GT, HN, MX-H	Mexican Pine Oak
Canada Warbler						63%	> 50	T, F	8, 12, 14	CO	Boreal Forest
Rufous-winged Sparrow						15-50%		R, A, U	33, 34	33, 34	Desert Scrub
Black-chinned Sparrow						61%	> 50	R, U	35, 32, 34	34, 35	Chaparral
Five-striped Sparrow						15-50%		R	34	MX-P	Tropical Dry Forest
Baird's Sparrow						72%	> 50	A, R, E	11	34	Grassland
Le Conte's Sparrow						61%	43	A, U, CI	6, 7, 11	25, 21, 20, 37	Grassland
Harris's Sparrow						63%		A, U	3, 7	19, 21	Arctic Tundra
Bobolink						59%	48*	A, U	11, 13, 12, 17, 14, 23	BO	Grassland
Cassin's Finch						68%	> 50	F	10, 9, 15	16	Western Forest
Evening Grosbeak						92%	38*	F	14, 12, 9, 10, 5	6, 8	Boreal Forest

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RED WATCH LIST SPECIES:

PIF's population goal for these 19 species of highest concern is to **RECOVER** populations well above current levels. These species have relatively **high scores for all vulnerability factors** (illustrated by the red bars in the adjacent figure, presented in the same order as the columns in Table 1). They have restricted distributions and small, declining populations. Most face elevated threats and also are habitat specialists, requiring focused management for particular habitat conditions. Several are threatened by rapidly changing climate—Saltmarsh Sparrow from sea-level rise, Black and Brown-capped Rosy-finches from loss of alpine snowfields. Increased support is necessary to successfully recover these species and prevent additional listings. More targeted monitoring is needed to clarify urgency and evaluate actions.

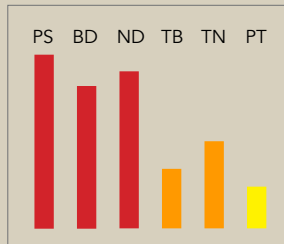


Inset: USFWS; USDA

Red Watch List species include two lekking grouse—iconic and spectacular birds in genuine danger of extinction—including the Lesser Prairie-Chicken.

"R" YELLOW WATCH LIST SPECIES:

These 12 species require constant care and long-term assessment to meet PIF's goal to **PREVENT DECLINES**. This group has **high vulnerability scores for restricted ranges ("R") and small populations (red)** with moderate threats (orange) and stable or increasing trends (yellow). It is critical that the already **high vulnerability** of these species **due to ecological specialization** is not increased by existing threats or unpredictable events. If populations of these species begin to decline, they will become the next Red Watch List species. These species also **need improved monitoring** due to high uncertainty in population trend. This group includes numerous species of aridland habitats in the southwestern U.S. as well as several marsh or grassland specialists.



Inset: ©Michelle Maani; Ken Rosenberg

The "R" Yellow Watch List group includes the California Gnatcatcher, which has a small range restricted to extreme southern California and Mexico and needs strong bi-national collaboration to protect its full distribution.

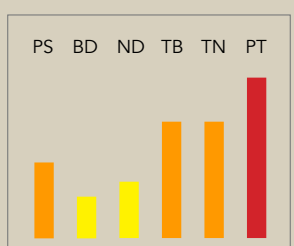


Inset: ©Matt Straffmaoen; USFWS

The "D" Yellow Watch List species include many steeply declining Neotropical migrants needing full life-cycle conservation, such as the Connecticut Warbler.

"D" YELLOW WATCH LIST SPECIES:

These 55 species have **declining populations ("D")** and thus PIF's goal is to **REVERSE** these **DECLINES**. This group has high population trend scores (red), and moderate to high threats as well as moderate population sizes (orange) but low vulnerability scores for range (yellow). Many of these species have lost 50%-90% of their population in the past 40 years, declines that are **representative of deteriorating conditions in virtually every terrestrial habitat and region**. PIF's goal for these species is to stabilize populations in the short-term and then reclaim a portion of their populations within 30 years, to bring them to safer levels and avoid special protection measures. Best management practices need to be developed and implemented to maintain the diversity of habitats and successional stages needed by these species.



PIF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- **Address needs** for continental Watch List species in all regional planning efforts, including Joint Venture Implementation Plans, State Wildlife Action Plans, Canadian Bird Conservation Region Strategies, and full life-cycle conservation plans.
- **Collaborate across jurisdictions** so local-scale efforts roll up to meet continental goals and objectives for highest priority landbirds (see page 26).
- **Work internationally** to conserve migratory Watch List species across their full life-cycle (see page 20).
- **Fill knowledge gaps** in population status and limiting factors through targeted monitoring and research, and ensure that the best science is being applied to conservation.
- **Evaluate conservation efforts** by implementing effective monitoring to assess progress towards population objectives.
- **Build capacity** with dedicated resources to keep birds from becoming endangered and requiring expensive federal protection and recovery efforts.

Watch List species require a wide spectrum of conservation actions—from meeting specific habitat needs to mitigating threats—across their full ranges and throughout their life-cycles.