

DoD Bird Conservation Focus Area: Research

Bird Conservation on Military Lands



Mission

To conserve migratory and resident birds and their habitats on Department of Defense lands.

DoD Bird Conservation — “Partners in Flight”

The Department of Defense (DoD) engages in a wide array of bird and habitat conservation activities. Collectively, these activities are known as Partners in Flight, to mirror related activities being implemented at the national and international levels. Through these efforts, DoD identifies strategies, goals, and priorities for key areas that support and enhance the military mission: stewardship, partnerships/cooperation, communication and education, habitat and species management, bird/animal aircraft strike hazard, monitoring, research, encroachment minimization, and quality of life. These goals and priorities outline DoD’s vision for developing and implementing conservation actions that support the mission while minimizing impacts to bird species and their habitats. These key focus areas enable DoD to better integrate programs for migratory and resident birds into existing natural resources and land management programs.

Goal: Research

Conduct research that helps to assure current, scientifically-based knowledge informs management actions.

Background

There are significant knowledge gaps surrounding the key factors impacting population sizes for priority bird species. Bird population responses to environmental variables, including DoD activities, are often poorly understood; and, the true effects of bird conservation activities on military mission requirements, whether positive or negative, are sometimes unknown or misunderstood. DoD must work with partners to improve its understanding of these issues.

Bird conservation activities can promote multilateral cooperation among military installations and other partners. Limiting factors for many migratory birds occur across landscapes much larger than the DoD footprint. Research on migratory connectivity—knowing where birds that breed on DoD lands spend the non-breeding season—can help identify limiting factors that occur off DoD lands. Similarly, understanding how to manage species and habitats that are reliant on human management for their continued existence will become increasingly critical as encroachment, habitat fragmentation, and non-native species further constrain management options.



A multi-year DoD-funded project studied the Western Sandpiper and its migration routes to better understand shorebird stopover patterns and behavior.

Photo: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Priorities

DoD developed the following priorities to help achieve its research goals:

- Help identify research-related bird conservation issues of highest relevance to mission requirements and installation needs.
- Develop ideas and projects that help facilitate bird- and habitat-related research projects important to DoD.
- Contribute DoD data to regional bird conservation projects.
- Encourage appropriate collaboration with research efforts (e.g., Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units, Joint Ventures).
- Develop partnerships with leaders in emerging fields of research, such as the Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program/Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (SERDP/ESTCP), Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Wildlife Research Center, National Science Foundation, and others.
- Develop and promote partnership-based regional and national applied management proposals for funding consideration by the DoD Legacy Resource Management Program or other sources.
- Target appropriate and available funding sources to support priority bird conservation research needs.

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Enabling the Mission, Defending the Resources
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