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INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

THE FLUTTER

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INSIDE

Lead Poisoning Risks in Bald Eagle

Unveiling Eggshell Mysteries

New Bird Species in Brazil

and MORE!

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INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

THE FLUTTER

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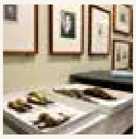
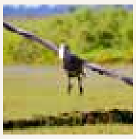
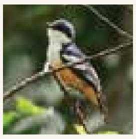

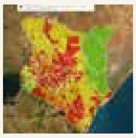




EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Ornithologists,

I am thrilled to share some exciting developments with you since our last issue. As the editor of The IOU Flutter, it is my pleasure to announce that we have now obtained an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) for the IOU Flutter. It is a significant milestone for our magazine.

In addition, we are introducing several new features, including specialized columns on various aspects of ornithology. I believe these enhancements will enrich your reading experience and help us reach deeper into the ornithological community.

Dr. Vidya Padmakumar
Editor, The IOU Flutter

Collection to Conservation: The Evolution of Bird Watching

Hunting and Collecting have always been a part of history, from ancient Egyptian pharaohs hunting in marshes and filling their tombs with artifacts to Inca chiefs with their menageries, and early modern Europeans like Ole Worm and Francis Willoughby amassing cabinets of curiosities. The bird-collecting craze of the 1800s and 1900s was an extension of this trend.

Throughout the 1700s, improved travel and advancements in firearms facilitated wildlife collecting. By the early 1800s, assembling collections of bird skins and eggs had become increasingly popular. This was the method of ornithological study at the time: owning a specimen to examine, measure, and reference was crucial for scientific bird research. The objective was to understand the relationships between species through comparison of their external (and sometimes internal) characteristics. Birds were shot, skinned, and prepared as "study skins" to fit neatly inside a cabinet drawer.

It was science that provided the greatest impetus for bird collecting. Collecting specimens was the norm for bird enthusiasts, but in 1898, Edmund Selous, an eminent ornithologist experienced a revelation while observing a pair of European nightjars. The nightjar, with its perfectly patterned plumage, offers extraordinary camouflage while on the ground. From his hide, Selous realized there was a bird incubating before him, but it took him over an hour to distinguish the bird from the surrounding fir-bark. Enthralled by the experience, he wrote in his diary, "I must confess that I once belonged to this great, poor army of killers, though, happily, a bad shot, a most fatigable collector, and a poor half-hearted bungler, generally. But now that I have watched birds closely, the killing of them seems to me as something monstrous and horrible."

Selous made empathy for birds fashionable and, in doing so, altered the world. Birdwatching burgeoned into a popular global pastime, eventually becoming a scientific endeavor and playing a critical role in bird conservation. The practice of dispassionate killing was gradually replaced by a gentler, more intimate approach aimed at understanding birds' lives. This shift was made possible by the availability of quality binoculars in the early 1900s, which allowed watchers to observe birds from a distance without disturbing them.

As birdwatching gained popularity, ornithologist Max Nicholson's view became dominant. Nicholson believed birdwatching should be "useful," encouraging birdwatchers to focus on understanding birds' behaviors and populations, thus beginning the practice of monitoring bird numbers.

Specimens of (clockwise from bottom) Wilson's phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*), Say's phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), Cassin's kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*), Clark's nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*) and Lewis's woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*) at the Academy of Natural Sciences.

Birders watching for a rare appearance of a White-tailed Lapwing (*Vanellus leucurus*) at Caerlaverock, Scotland

Birdwatching received another boost in 1940, during the early days of World War II, with the publication of James Fisher's Watching Birds, which sold over a million copies. The book highlighted the variety of people engaged in the hobby, and for those involved in the war, birdwatching provided a welcome distraction. In German prisoner-of-war camps, birds offered a much-needed respite from boredom and despair.

One serviceman who found solace in birds was John Buxton, who had been warden of Stockholm Bird Observatory in 1939. Captured in Norway in 1940, Buxton spent the rest of the war in various prison camps, where he encouraged fellow inmates to watch and record birds' behavior. Buxton corresponded with Germany's leading ornithologist, Erwin Stresemann, who generously sent books and bird bands to aid their studies. Buxton later transformed the accumulated notes into a monograph on the common redstart, published in 1950.

Post-war, interest in birds evolved from a "comparatively rare eccentricity into a national pastime," according to a 2007 history in British Birds. This shift saw the emergence of two distinct strands: purposeful surveying versus recreational birding. Professional ornithologist Reverend Peter Hartley criticized non-scientific birdwatching as "lazy, incompetent and slovenly," while amateur Denis Summers-Smith defended it, likening it to enjoying a concert without reading the score.

This debate reflected birding's descent through the social hierarchy. In the 1800s and early 1900s, serious bird interest was limited to the wealthy. Even in the 1950s, birdwatching was dominated by the upper class. By the 1970s and '80s, as birding's popularity continued to grow, it attracted a broader demographic, including the working and middle classes.

As birding became more accessible, the approach to it evolved as well. The days of trudging through underbrush with binoculars have largely given way to more comfortable experiences. Modern birders often enjoy their observations from wooden boardwalks and cozy hides, making the hobby more appealing to a wider audience. Additionally, the expansion of higher education since the 1960s has seen more women pursuing degrees in biology and zoology, leading to a significant increase in professional female ornithologists. Today, tens of millions of people around the world show interest in birds. While there is no precise definition of what constitutes a birder, the sheer number of enthusiasts is telling. Ironically, as the number of bird enthusiasts has surged, bird populations worldwide have been declining, primarily due to habitat loss and overexploitation. This paradox means more people are searching for fewer birds. However, the silver lining is that the growing number of birders, combined with technological advancements like the online database eBird and the ICARUS migration tracking project, is revolutionizing our understanding of bird biology. These tools are providing unprecedented insights and aiding conservation efforts on a scale unimaginable just two decades ago.

The evolution of birdwatching from an elite pastime to a globally popular hobby has been remarkable. The shift from collecting to observing has not only enriched the lives of countless individuals but also contributed significantly to scientific understanding and conservation efforts. As we continue to explore and appreciate the avian world, it is imperative that we also work towards preserving it for future generations.

Vidya Padmakumar
Editor, The IOU Flutter
flutter@internationalornithology.org

Reference:

Birds and Us: A 12,000-Year History from Cave Art to Conservation by Tim Birkhead. Published by Princeton University Press. ISBN 978-0691239927. 2022

THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Process of Climate Warming

The process of climate warming (a more appropriate term than the less alarming term "climate change") is not only continuing, but accelerating, as is impressively demonstrated by interactive comparisons of panoramic images of Alpine glaciers taken decades ago and now [1, 2]. Although glaciers are melting globally, this process can be traced most visibly in the Swiss Alps because panorama pictures of the Swiss Alps have been taken since the mid-19th century. The withdrawing Alpine glaciers were not always considered to be a bad thing, though: During the Little Ice Age (ca. 1300-1850 A.D.), the advancing glaciers destroyed villages and farming infrastructure which resulted in serious social unrest as alpine refugees sought shelter in the lowlands [3, 4]. Stories from those terrible times must still have been vivid for my father, who was born in 1913, when he showed me (as a child) how the Rhonegletscher (the glacier of the Rhone River) had retreated farther from the hotel in which his family stayed when he was a small boy. He was clearly not alarmed by this change and may have even mused about future environmental conditions like those of the Medieval Warm Period between 800-1250 when grains and wine were cultivated at greater altitudes and when alpine regions could be colonized for the first time [5, 6]. My father and the public of his generation may be excused for their naiveté as they did not have the climate data that started to be gathered by concerned scientists by the late 1960s. But we in our time have had these data and factual evidence of the anomalous rapid rise of surface temperatures and related weather instability for our entire life [7].

On my recent visit to Switzerland this past (boreal) summer, I had plenty of opportunities to observe the accelerated changes that had taken place in the five years since my last visit while my Swiss friends had gotten accustomed to the changes as a matter of course. The architectural characters of villages and historical towns are changed by large apartment buildings to accommodate the increased population. Industrial buildings are encroaching into rural areas. Highways run between high sound barriers that protect surrounding agglomerations from traffic noise and bar the view of the landscape.

Because of its small size, Switzerland may demonstrate social reactions to environmental changes more clearly than larger countries. Like elsewhere, the human population has been increasing with a concomitant increased demand for food, water, habitation, transport, services, etc. within the unchanging circumscribed limits of its habitable territory. While the Swiss government has the responsibility to manage the changing conditions, Swiss citizens can intervene in this legislative process through initiatives (proposing new laws) and referenda (challenging proposed or existing laws) through the institution of direct democracy [8]. Therefore, the voting pattern on recent initiatives and referenda by the Swiss citizenry may illustrate the tensions between conflicting demands for a high quality of human life, a thriving business climate, and the protection of biodiversity.

Recently, for example, some Swiss citizens had collected a sufficient number of signatures to force a vote on an initiative proposing that 30% of the land be set aside for the protection of biodiversity in accordance with the 30x30 Biodiversity Goal at COP28, but the plebiscite rejected this initiative because of concerns for and by business and farming interests [9, 10]. Earlier, a group of senior Swiss women had taken their government to court at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg (France) for not having done enough to stop climate warming. This lawsuit was possible because science had shown that high temperatures are especially and specifically noxious to older women.
Although the European court decided in favor of the claimants, the Swiss government decided to disregard the court's ruling [11, 12].

The outcome of the two cases of citizen initiatives pushing the government towards prioritizing environmental concerns may be frustrating to scientists. But the two cases also illustrate the back-and-forth between environmental and business interests, between a willingness to change course based on scientific insights and business as usual. This democratic tussle allows for a continuing discussion between the two sides and, more importantly, the real possibility that the balance of power between environmentalists and "financialists" may be shifting as the protection of biodiversity is recognized as being congruent with the protection of human health and, thus, also with enlightened business interests. The important issue here is the continuing willingness of citizens everywhere to demand their government to prioritize environmental causes. In any case, we ornithologists need to continue to use our unequivocal research results, data, and insights to support the activist voices for biodiversity protection because, unlike my father's generation, we do know that the current climate warming is created by human activity and is responsible for endangering life on earth.

Whenever I am in Switzerland, I visit also the Swiss Ornithological Institute (or "Vogelwarte") in Sempach which celebrates its centenary this year and which has been a strong and much-appreciated supporter of the IOU, whose members are leading numerous research and conservation projects in Switzerland and Africa (see *https://www.vogelwarte.ch/en/*), and whose public exhibits are exciting and unusually informative about bird life. And I make a special trip to Schwyz, a town in central Switzerland, to visit with Professor Urs N. Glutz von Blotzheim, the widely respected ornithologist and author of the monumental 14-volume "Handbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas" [Handbuch of the Birds of Central Europe] (13), who has combined an illustrious scientific and academic career with a deeply personal engagement in issues of biodiversity and nature protection (see also "Meet an IOU Fellow" on page 6). I return from such visits enriched and reinvigorated by new information, fresh insights and ideas and with a confirmation that being a scientist and ornithologist is a calling, not just a profession.

Dominique G. Homberger, Ph.D.
IOU Immediate Past President
International Ornithologists' Union

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST CARD

I just read the April issue of The Flutter. I was fascinated and learned much! Wonderful content, and beautiful graphics!
Warm wishes and regards.

Prof. Dr. Dominique G. Homberger/
Immediate Past President,
International Ornithologists' Union.

POST CARD

Dear Editor,
I wanted to take a moment to commend the April issue of The Flutter. It was excellent, packed with a wealth of interesting information and insights in ornithology. Thank you so much for your hard work!
Best regards,

Dr. Murugan Shanthakumar
Ornithologist,
EcoDiversity Lab,
Bengaluru, India

POST CARD

Dear Editor,
As an ornithologist, I was particularly impressed by the April issue of Flutter. The introduction of new columns on paleo-ornithology and diverse aspects of avian science was exceptional. Thank you for fostering such engaging content.

Warm regards,
Dr. Huwang Lei

How to Write to The IOU Flutter:

Brief letters with comments on articles appearing in the magazine are welcome. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions. Please include an email address.

E-mail us: Letters to the Editor – flutter@internationalornithology.org

Join us on LinkedIn - linkedin.com/company/international-ornithologists-union/

Find us on Instagram – instagram.com/the_iou_

Follow us on Facebook - facebook.com/IOU – International Ornithologists' Union

MEET AN IOU FELLOW:

Professor Urs N. Glutz von Blotzheim

Urs N. Glutz von Blotzheim was born in Switzerland in the town of Solothurn on December 18, 1932. He earned his doctoral degree from the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) with a dissertation on the morphology and development of the axial skeleton of Ratite birds. His first job was with the Swiss Ornithological Institute in Sempach doing research on breeding biology, ecology and migration and then became Vice Director of the Institute until 1967 when he started to work full-time on the monumental 14-volume "Handbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas" [Handbuch of the Birds of Central Europe], the first volume having been published in 1966 and the last having been completed in 1997 (1). Previously, Professor Glutz had published "Die Brutvögel der Schweiz" in 1962 (2), perhaps as a prelude to his *magnum opus*. It would be a great service to the ornithological community if the Handbuch were translated into English and perhaps complemented by data and observations that have been generated since the original publication of the volumes. The reach of the information gathered in the Handbuch goes way beyond Central Europe as many species migrate and have close relatives elsewhere.

Concurrently to his work at the Swiss Ornithological Institute, Professor Glutz had an academic appointment at the University of Bern (Switzerland) where he supervised 35 Master's theses and 19 doctoral dissertations before retiring as Emeritus Professor in 1998. His interest in the history of ornithology led him to recognize not only a long list of Swiss ornithologists but also the contributions to ornithology by amateurs and by his wife Anne Marie (3).

Professor Glutz has received numerous honors and awards for his work, such as an Honorary Doctorate of the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) and elections to Honorary Member by the Ornithological Societies of Saxony and Bavaria (Germany), German Ornithological Society, British Ornithologists' Union, American Ornithologists' Union, and International Ornithologist' Union, and many others. He is also the recipient of the prestigious Konrad Lorenz Medal. On the occasion of his 80th birthday, colleagues and former students organized a symposium and a Festschrift in his honor (4, 5).

Professor Glutz has remained an energetic, passionate, and infinitely curious scientist who is not afraid of participating in conservation issues. Besides his studies and work in ornithology, Professor Glutz has maintained a broad range of interests in art, social and political history, conservation, and natural history with a hobby of professional-level photography, such as superb pictures of live dragonflies and birds in their natural environment. The IOU is sending Professor Glutz their heartfelt best wishes on his upcoming birthday on December 18.

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HOT NEWS

The IOU Flutter will now feature an ISSN

The IOU Flutter is proud to announce a significant achievement: the magazine has officially obtained its International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), 3006-9890.

The Flutter looks forward to continuing its mission of providing valuable content to its readers, and this new milestone is just the beginning of an exciting chapter ahead.

Dr. Vidya Padmakumar
Editor, The IOU Flutter

Global Messenger Equipment Grants Awarded

In an exciting development for wildlife conservation, two innovative projects in Africa have been awarded the prestigious Global Messenger Equipment Grant. This grant, a collaboration between The International Ornithologists' Union (IOU) and Hunan Global Messenger Technology Co., Ltd, provides crucial animal tracking equipment to bird researchers.

Shoebill Conservation in Zambia

Maggie Hirschauer, the Shoebill Program Manager at Bangweulu Wetlands, Zambia, has received the grant to further her work on monitoring the release success of captive-reared Shoebills. Hirschauer's project aims to use GPS tracking to gather vital data on the survival, integration, and movement of these rare birds. This information will aid in refining conservation strategies and updating land management plans to protect critical habitats from human disturbance and fire. Hirschauer's work (*https://www.africanparks.org/shoebill-conservation-bangweulu-unique-solution-unique-bird*) has already gained international attention, and this grant will enhance community education and outreach programs.

Shoebill (*Balaeniceps rex*) © Megan Loftie-Eaton

Cape vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*) © Vulpro

Vulture Conservation in South Africa

Kerri Wolter, Founder and CEO of VulPro *(https://www.vulpro.com/meet-the-team/*, *https://beprovidedconservationradio.libsyn.com/kerri-wolter-founder-of-vulpro)*, has also been awarded the grant for her project on enhancing captive breeding success of African vultures. VulPro's initiative focuses on using GPS tracking to monitor the movement and behavior of reintroduced vultures. This data is essential for understanding vulture ecology and implementing effective conservation strategies. Wolter's work addresses the urgent need to bolster vulture populations, which play a critical role in maintaining ecological balance by reducing the spread of diseases.

Both projects highlight the importance of using advanced technology in wildlife conservation and underscore the commitment to preserving endangered species and habitats in Africa.

OPPORTUNITY WITH THE IOU

Internship for Communications and Publications Committee at the International Ornithologists' Union (IOU)

The IOU (International Ornithologists' Union) is offering a voluntary (unpaid) internship to a dynamic individual who is interested in networking options at the global level. The internship offers opportunities in honing communication and publication skills in a collegial, multilingual and multicultural environment.

The internship is a competitive voluntary position with an official appointment, a complimentary membership to the IOU, and a significantly discounted registration fee to the International Ornithological Congress™ (IOCongress™) in Mexico in 2026. The position offers room to use creativity and a personal touch into the IOU's activities.

The successful candidate will be at the postdoc level or higher with a strong command of English and, if possible, other languages in writing and, if possible, also in speaking. Familiarity with electronic media (social media and web pages) is required. Expertise in video and graphic design is an advantage.

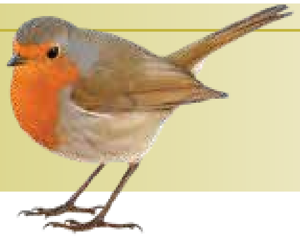
As the Communications and Publications Intern, you will work closely with Dr. Vidya Padmakumar, the Chair of the Communications and Publications Committee, and Editor of The IOU Flutter, the official magazine of the IOU, and with the IOU Council Members (see *https://www.internationalornithology.org/iou-council)*. The job expectations include management of IOU communications through various channels, such as social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Threads, LinkedIn, Wikipedia) and our IOU website. Additionally, you may participate in IOU Council Meetings and provide support in managing the publication processes of The IOU Flutter and the IOC Proceedings *https://www.internationalornithology.org/iocongress-proceedings*.

If you are interested in this position, please reach out via email with any inquiries. To be considered, kindly submit a concise 1-page CV and a 200–300 word statement outlining your vision for the role to Dr. Vidya Padmakumar at ***flutter@internationalornithology.org*** or ***vidyapkumar3@gmail.com*** by **15 January 2025** with the Subject Line **"Application for the position of CPC Intern: IOU"**. The final decision will be made by **30 January 2024**, and the selected candidate can start at the earliest. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Submit a concise 1-page CV and a 200–300 word statement outlining your vision for the role to Dr. Vidya Padmakumar at *flutter@internationalornithology.org* or *vidyapkumar3@gmail.com*

by 15 January 2025

BRIEFINGS



Cocaine Trafficking Threatens Central America's Biodiversity

A groundbreaking study published in “Nature Sustainability” reveals the environmental toll of cocaine trafficking in Central America. Led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, researchers found that deforestation linked to drug routes endangers critical habitats for migratory birds. Areas affected overlap with vital forests and Indigenous lands, threatening species like the Golden-cheeked Warbler. The research highlights the failure of current U.S. drug policies, which unintentionally expand trafficking networks by forcing traffickers to re-route their supply lines to escape detection.. The study calls for strategies that empower local communities to protect ecosystems and develop sustainable livelihoods.
Full Article: *https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-024-01365-z*

The Impact of Social Interaction: Findings from Zebra Finch Courtship

A recent McGill study reveals how social interactions enhance learning, with implications for human development. Researchers found that zebra finches lacking early social experiences can still forge strong partnerships later. Females, who had never heard a mating song, were able to quickly develop a preference for the melody of a male once they cohabited.
Full Article: *https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rspb.2024.0358*

Exciting Research Uncovers Seabirds Pursuing Tropical Storms

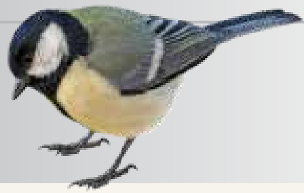
A recent study highlights the unusual foraging behavior of the rare Desertas Petrel (*Pterodroma deserta*), a seabird found in the North Atlantic, during hurricane season. Unlike other pelagic seabirds, these petrels actively seek out intense tropical cyclones, taking advantage of the changing conditions. This finding offers fresh perspectives on how cyclones affect marine life in the open ocean.
Full Article: *https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2024.06.022*

Migration Mystery Solved: Starlings Fly Solo

A longstanding 70-year research question has been resolved: young, naive starlings navigate to their winter habitats without relying on the guidance of older birds. While starlings are social creatures year-round, they do not mimic each other's migration paths. By revisiting a classic 'displacement' experiment and incorporating new findings, researchers have clarified this enduring debate.
Full Article: *http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2024.0217*

Genetic Stability Found in Panamanian Manakin Hybrid Zone

While species are often viewed as distinct entities, interbreeding can create hybrid zones where characteristics blend. These areas can vary in stability, offering insights into the evolution of species boundaries. Recent research has identified a hybrid zone between two manakin species in Panama that has maintained relative stability for the last 30 years.
Full Article: *http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/evolut/qpae076*



BIRDS IN THE NEWS

Rediscovery of the Mussau Triller (*Lalage conjuncta*) in Papua New Guinea

Mussau Triller (*Lalage conjuncta*)
© Joshua Bergmark | Ornis Birding Expeditions

After 44 years, the elusive Mussau Triller (*Lalage conjuncta*) has been documented in Papua New Guinea, marking a significant milestone for avian conservation. In June 2024, a birding expedition traversed the forests of Mussau Island, part of the St. Matthias islands in the Bismarck Archipelago. The group, having already identified three of the island's endemic bird species, was in search of the Mussau Triller, a bird not seen since 1979.

The Mussau Triller, a member of the cuckooshrike family (Campephagidae), is distinct with its chestnut-colored breast and feeds on fruit and insects. It inhabits the dense forest centers, making it difficult to locate. The birding team used an old ambulance to penetrate deeper into the forest, leading to a fortunate discovery. A participant spotted several of the trillers perched in a tree, allowing the group to capture the first known photographs and sound recordings of the species. They observed nine birds across three flocks.

The Mussau Triller is classified as Vulnerable by the IUCN Red List, primarily due to logging activities on the island since the 1980s. Data from Global Forest Watch shows a 7.2% decline in primary forest in New Ireland province from 2000 to 2023. Logging roads, while facilitating access, pose a threat to the triller's habitat.

Island species face significant extinction risks, with the majority of bird extinctions occurring on islands. The rediscovery of the Mussau Triller underscores the importance of monitoring such species, as habitat changes can have unforeseen impacts.

The East Melanesian Islands, a biodiversity hotspot, are now home to 15 lost birds, making the region a priority for conservation efforts. The global birding community, through platforms like eBird and iNaturalist, plays a crucial role in tracking bird species worldwide. These citizen science contributions provide essential data for conservation analysis and planning.

New Hanover Mannikin (*Lonchura nigerrima*)
© Joshua Bergmark | Ornis Birding Expeditions

Each observation enhances understanding of the species' habitat needs and population trends. The expedition also captured images of other rare birds, such as the Manus Dwarf Kingfisher (*Ceyx dispar*) and the New Hanover Mannikin (**Lonchura nigerrima**), highlighting the excitement and importance of exploring these remote regions.

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Reference:

Sawatzky; Katie Doke. 2024. FOUND: Birders rediscover lost bird on Mussau in Papua New Guinea! Search for Lost Birds. https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/news/massau-triller

"The East Melanesian Islands, a biodiversity hotspot, are now home to 15 lost birds, making the region a priority for conservation efforts."

Lead Poisoning Risk in Bald Eagles from Deer Scavenging in New York State

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) © James Bodkin

A study from Cornell University highlights that bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) suffer the highest risk of lead poisoning among over 30 species of birds and mammals scavenging deer carcasses in New York State. The study, which analyzed game camera images provided by local residents, established a comprehensive inventory of scavengers of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), identifying 14 avian and 17 mammalian species, ranging from American crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) to Virginia opossums (*Didelphis virginiana*). The findings indicated that bald eagles are particularly susceptible to lead exposure due to the ingestion of fragmented lead bullets.

The research supports ongoing initiatives by the New York State Wildlife Health Program, a collaboration between the Cornell Wildlife Health Lab and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), which has prioritized the monitoring of bald eagles because of the higher frequency of reported cases of illness or mortality in this species. This focus has resulted in enhanced testing for lead poisoning and necropsies, particularly at the Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine's Animal Health Diagnostic Center.

The authors emphasize the significant vulnerability of bald eagles as bioindicators for lead toxicity, allowing for expanded lead testing across more species over time. Lead ammunition, commonly utilized by deer hunters, tends to fragment upon impact, dispersing numerous small particles that can pose a lethal threat to scavengers. Even minuscule lead fragments can be fatal for eagles, and no safe threshold for lead exposure exists for humans, particularly for vulnerable populations such as pregnant women and children.

Previous studies conducted by Cornell and DEC collaborators revealed widespread lead exposure among bald eagles, with approximately 40% of the sampled population exhibiting toxic levels. In New York and the broader northeastern region, it has been estimated that lead poisoning has diminished the population growth rate of bald eagles by around 5%, which compromises their ability to cope with other environmental threats.

In a report issued in 2022, it was recommended that hunters opt for non-toxic ammunition for example, bullets made from 100% copper (*https://huntingwithnonlead.org/*) -and properly dispose off carcasses that attract scavengers. Efforts to promote the use of lead alternatives have been integrated into hunting education programs. Furthermore, the state has launched a pilot rebate initiative for non-lead ammunition, now accessible statewide
(https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2024-07/us-fish-and-wildlife-service-announces-voluntary-pilot-programs-lead-free

Eagles most commonly ingest lead by eating carcasses containing ammunition fragments.
© Estelle Shuttleworth

The current study, which reviewed nearly 160 images from 33 game cameras monitoring deer carcasses from 2010 to 2023, identified various scavenging species, including eagles, hawks, and owls, as well as mourning doves, woodpeckers, cardinals, and blue jays. Mammalian scavengers included coyotes, bobcats, and foxes, alongside smaller species, such as squirrels, weasels, and skunks.

The research categorized 17 species as particularly vulnerable to lead exposure from ammunition, with bald eagles leading this group, followed by golden eagles (rarely found in New York), American goshawks, American crows, and common ravens. Some scavengers are less exposed due to migratory or hibernation behaviors during the hunting season.

The transition to non-lead ammunition involves complex sociopolitical dynamics. Incentive programs designed to encourage the voluntary adoption of lead alternatives, such as all-copper bullets, are seen as a viable strategy. These initiatives provide hunters with a risk-free opportunity to experiment with non-lead options, potentially leading to increased acceptance and recognition of their effectiveness for both human health and wildlife conservation.

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FEATHERS OF DISCOVERY

New Bird species in Brazil

Silvery-cheeked Antshrike (*Sakesphoroides cristatus*)
© Claudia Brasileiro

Northern Silvery-cheeked Antshrike
(*Sakesphoroides niedeguidonae*)

Recent research from the Universidade Federal do Pará reveals that the bird previously identified as the silvery-cheeked antshrike (*Sakesphoroides cristatus*) actually comprises two distinct species. The newly identified species, the northern silvery-cheeked antshrike (*Sakesphoroides niedeguidonae*), is native to the Caatinga, a northeastern Brazilian region characterized by its seasonal dry tropical forest and diverse geomorphology, with altitudes varying from sea level to over 1,000 meters.

Previously considered part of the genus *Sakesphorus, Sakesphoroides cristatus* was reclassified into its own genus due to genetic and morphological differences.

Females of *Sakesphoroides niedeguidonae* display lighter amber hues, with olive-brown backs and darker tails featuring black and white barring, distinguishing them from *Sakesphoroides cristatus*. Vocalizations also differ, particularly in the structure of initial notes. The new species primarily inhabits the left bank of the river, with some populations on the right bank possibly due to historical river course changes.

Sakesphoroides niedeguidonae thrives in various Caatinga habitats and has an extensive range of approximately 630,000 km², placing it in the Least Concern category for conservation. However, future climate scenarios suggest potential range reductions, which could alter its conservation status.

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Reference:

Cerqueira, P., Gonçalves, G. R., Quaresma, T. F., Silva, M., Pichorim, M., & Aleixo, A. (2024). A new antshrike (Aves: Thamnophilidae) endemic to the Caatinga and the role of climate oscillations and drainage shift in shaping cryptic diversity of Neotropical seasonal dry forests. Zoologica Scripta, 53, 487–508. https://doi.org/10.1111/zsc.12672. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/zsc.12672

Discovery of the Elusive El Dorado Antpitta in Colombia

In a remarkable scientific discovery, a new bird species has been identified in Colombia's Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. This elusive bird, resembling a large thrush with powerful legs and no apparent tail feathers, was found near the El Dorado Reserve. The reserve, known for its biodiversity, protects numerous endemic bird species and a variety of amphibians, reptiles, and orchids.

The discovery of new bird species is uncommon, with only three species described globally in 2023. Colombia, home to over 1,979 bird species, continues to surprise with new finds, such as the Chami Antpitta (*Grallaria alvarezi*) in 2020 (Isler et al., 2020).

The identification process involved collaboration among ornithologists who initially thought the bird resembled the Undulated Antpitta (*Grallaria squamigera*) found in Colombia's Andean cordilleras. However, through detailed observations, song recordings, and careful study of an adult bird, the team confirmed this was a distinct new species.

Tentatively called the "El Dorado Antpitta," it features unique characteristics, such as a gray head contrasting with an olive back and wings, a bright white "beard," and a black collar. Despite its distinctive vocalizations, the bird had gone largely unnoticed in the reserve since 2005.

The El Dorado Antpitta, discovered by ProAves in the Sierra Nevada/Photo: ProAves

Many birdwatchers and ornithologists have visited the area in the past two decades without recognizing this species. There was only one brief sighting in 2015, resulting in a distant, blurred photograph.

Further documentation, including ecological traits and vocalizations, is underway. Phylogenetic studies are being conducted using blood samples from a captured and released individual.

This discovery is significant, as the species was found on a former property of a renowned early 20th-century bird collector, who never documented it. Initially thought to be similar to the Undulated Antpitta, it proved to be distinct.

However, the El Dorado Antpitta faces threats from deforestation in the cooler subtropical forests around the reserve and Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Deforestation is driven by land demand for holiday homes and farms, endangering the species.

The survival of the El Dorado Antpitta is uncertain, with its small population at risk. This discovery highlights the urgent need for conservation efforts to protect the unique biodiversity of the region.

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Amable Melendez, A. L. (2024). Observación de aves como alternativa de desarrollo ecoturístico en el valle de Kosñipata, Paucartambo-Cusco, Perú. https://repositorio.unsaac.edu.pe/handle/20.500.12918/9134

"This discovery is significant, as the species was found on a former property of a renowned early 20th-century bird collector"

SPECIES SNAPSHOT

The Potoos

Common Potoo (*Nyctibius griseus*). Photo by Fabio Maffei/Shutterstock.

Potoos, members of the Nyctibiidae family, belong to two genera: *Nyctibius* and *Phyllaemulor*. Comprising seven species, these birds inhabit regions across Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Related distantly to nightjars, they share nocturnal habits and large eyes but are not closely related to owls.

Ranging in size from eight inches to nearly two feet, potoos possess distinctive features such as large heads, short necks, elongated bodies, and small curved bills. Though currently dwelling in the Neotropics, fossils from the Eocene Epoch indicate their historical presence in Europe.

By day, potoos rely on camouflage, mimicking broken branches with their gray and brown plumage. They achieve this by adopting a cryptic posture, stretching vertically, closing their eyes, and compressing their head feathers. Unique eyelid slits allow them to monitor their surroundings even when seemingly at rest (Borrero, 1974).

Inhabiting tropical forests and savannahs, potoos emerge at night to catch flying insects, occasionally preying on bats and small birds. Their hunting strategy involves perching exposed, waiting to swoop down on prey. Long wings and tails aid in agile maneuvers.

At night, their presence is often revealed through eyeshine or their distinct vocalizations. Each species produces unique sounds, from the Great Potoo's deep roar to the Common Potoo's melodic song, and the Northern Potoo's guttural shriek. The Northern Potoo was once considered a subspecies of the Common Potoo but was later reclassified due to differences in their calls. Folklore in South America often associates these calls with lost souls.

Many aspects of potoo life remain unknown, including their breeding age, dispersal patterns, and lifespan. Their nesting habits are peculiar: females lay a single egg in a branch crevice, and both parents nurture the chick, which learns to mimic a branch posture by two weeks old.

“*By day, potoos rely on camouflage, mimicking broken branches with their gray and brown plumage*”

Meet the Seven Potoos

1

The Great Potoo, the largest species, inhabits Central and northern South America and is known for preying on bats and birds.

Great potoo (*Nyctibius grandis*)
© Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 4.0

2

The Long-tailed Potoo, with its distinctive tail, is found in South American lowland forests.

Long-tailed Potoo (*Nyctibius aethereus*)
© Felipe Vargas

3

The Common Potoo is recognized for its song and inhabits forest edges and open woodlands.

Common Potoo (*Nyctibius griseus*)
© Paulo Jose Benatti/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 4.0

4

The Northern Potoo, with its shriek, resembles the Common Potoo but differs in vocalization.

Northern Potoo (*Nyctibius jamaicensis*)
© Francisco Alba

5
The Andean Potoo resides in humid Andean forests at high elevations and remains largely enigmatic.

Andean Potoo (*Nyctibius maculosus*)
© Nick Athanas

6
The White-winged Potoo is noted for its wing patches and prefers Amazon habitats with sandy soil.

White-winged Potoo (*Nyctibius leucopterus*)
© Tom Johnson

7
The Rufous Potoo, the smallest, is a rare sight in its Amazonian home.

Rufous Potoo (*Phyllaemulor bracteatus*)
© Volker Hesse

Despite no immediate threat status, all potoo species face population declines, primarily due to habitat loss. Conservation efforts, including creating bird reserves in collaboration with various partners, aim to protect these unique birds and their habitats.

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FRAMEWORK

Addressing the Global Crisis of Illegal Bird Trade

Indonesian police display dead birds from a smuggling operation in Surabaya. Thousands of endangered birds are being sold illegally across the country, a wildlife trade watchdog said yesterday. AFP Photo

The illegal trade in ivory or rhino horn often overshadows the illegal bird trade which also poses just as great a threat for wildlife. This burgeoning multibillion-dollar industry contributes to the global illegal wildlife trade, which generates an estimated $7-23 billion annually. It's a vast criminal enterprise impacting one in four bird and mammal species worldwide.

Bird trade can lead to the depletion of local wildlife populations, disrupting the balance of ecosystems that rural communities depend on for sustenance and cultural identity. As these ecosystems degrade, rural livelihoods suffer, hindering economic development and diminishing opportunities for sustainable practices that could support local populations. Another critical concern is its role in spreading zoonotic diseases—illnesses transmitted from animals to humans. According to the UN Environment Programme, 75% of new diseases emerge from wildlife.
In Africa, the illegal trade includes elephant tusks, rhino horn, pangolin scales, bush meat, and endangered birds, like vultures, driving species toward extinction and degrading biodiversity. In Asia, organized poaching networks deplete forests of songbirds for markets, exacerbated by popular singing competitions. In Java, more songbirds are caged than in the wild.

> *"The illegal wildlife trade, generates an estimated $7-23 billion annually."*

Helmeted Hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*) - Red List Status: CR – Critically Endangered, criteria A3cd (IUCN 2020) © Wong Tsu Shi

In the Mediterranean, Arabian Peninsula, Northern and Central Europe, and the Caucasus, millions of birds are removed from their habitats – dead or alive - annually, severely impacting populations (Brochet, 2016). The Eurasian Goldfinch, for example, has lost a significant portion of its range in the Western Maghreb due to hunting and trade, leading to increased rarity and an illegal trading network. A single goldfinch can fetch $50—almost a third of the average local monthly income.

In the Americas, wild-caught parrots are sold despite international and national prohibitions. In Bolivia, over 22,000 parrots from 31 species are illegally traded each year, with 94% being wild caught. Mexico sees the capture of 65,000–78,500 parrots annually, driven by the profitable nature of the trade. There has been significant increase in illegal wildlife trade through the internet. Rare species can sell for over $1,000, with significant smuggling into the US where importation of wild-caught birds is prohibited (Mir et al., 2024).

Efforts to combat this crisis include creating safe habitats for species, like the Helmeted Hornbill, providing sustainable livelihoods for former trappers, and supporting law enforcement to apply regulations effectively (Hatten, 2024). Documenting local criminal networks and their connections to transnational operations aids governments in recognizing the issue's scale and encourages appropriate legal and enforcement measures.

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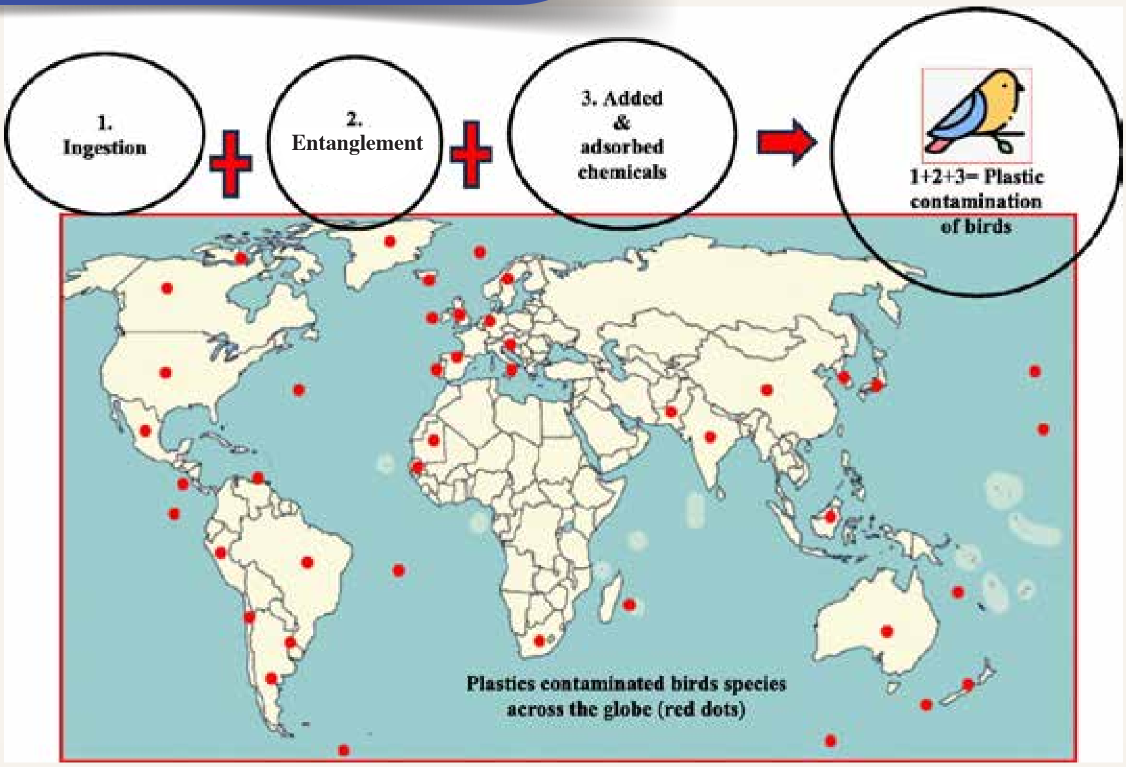
INFOGRAPHIC | GOLAM KIBRIA

Plastic Contamination in Coastal and Marine Birds: A Global Overview



This infographic highlights the alarming contamination of coastal and marine bird species with plastics across 39 locations worldwide. Key findings reveal that various seabirds—such as fulmars, shearwaters, and gulls—are heavily affected by plastic ingestion, with significant impacts observed among Procellariidae, Laridae, and Diomedeidae families. Birds consume microplastics, mesoplastics, and macroplastics in various forms, including fragments and fishing lines, with common colors being white, blue, and green. The ingestion of plastics poses lethal and sublethal threats, exacerbated by toxic chemical additives. Many affected species are critically endangered or vulnerable.

Full Article:

Kibria, G., 2024. Contamination of coastal and marine bird species with plastics: Global analysis and synthesis. Marine Pollution Bulletin, 206, p.116687.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2024.116687

> *"Many affected species are critically endangered or vulnerable due to rising plastic contamination."*

STRATEGIES

Innovative Nesting Strategies: Red-backed Shrike Utilizes Song Thrush Nests

Red-Backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) © Nigel Voaden

The availability of nesting sites is vital for birds in intensive agricultural landscapes. The removal of trees and snags due to logging threatens many bird species, leading to a decline in their populations. Typically, when nests are lost, passerines rebuild them for a new clutch, often relocating to avoid predators and brood parasites. This is common for the Red-backed Shrike, which constructs new nests for each brood. However, unusual behaviors, such as using existing nests, have been observed.

A new study reports instances of Red-backed Shrikes reusing Song Thrush nests within a single breeding season. Possible explanations for this behavior include conserving time and energy or reducing nest parasitism risk. Despite limited observations, further research is needed to understand this phenomenon.

Reusing nests is rare among open-cup nesting passerines. Similar cases include Blackbirds using nests abandoned by Song Thrushes and Fieldfares. Common explanations for this behavior include a lack of suitable sites, reduced nest-building costs, predator avoidance, or minimizing brood parasitism. However, for Red-backed Shrikes, a deficit in breeding sites is unlikely, as many remain available in Poland's agricultural landscapes.

The reuse of nests might be tied to a lack of secure sites, as seen in Blackbirds, where effective concealment is crucial. Breeding success varies yearly, and thrush nests, being larger, might be more noticeable to predators, making safety an unlikely reason for reuse.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)
© Rafael Pardo

Red-backed Shrikes do not reuse nests from other shrikes due to damage or previous predation. In ideal conditions, shrikes can build a nest in 3–4 days, but it generally takes 6 days. Reusing a Song Thrush nest likely reduces the time and effort needed for nest construction, facilitating quicker re-nesting after clutch loss.

The study questions why shrikes do not reuse Blackbird nests, despite their availability. The difference may lie in nest composition and moisture retention; Song Thrush nests dry quicker than those of Blackbirds, which retain more water. This preference for drier nests might suit the thermophilic nature of the Red-backed Shrike.
These findings suggest that nest reuse by Red-backed Shrikes could be a strategic adaptation to save time and energy in specific conditions, highlighting the potential for innovative behaviors in response to environmental challenges.

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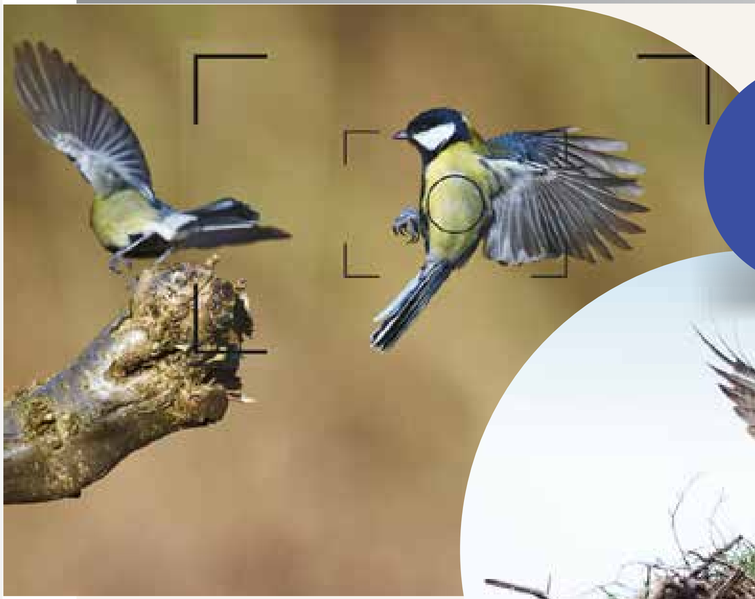
Reference:

Kwiecinski, Z., Podkowa, P., & Kosicki, J. Z. (2024). The reuse of Song Thrush (Turdus philomelos) nests by the Red-backed Shrike (Lanius collurio) in an intensive agricultural landscape: a coincidence or a new solution? The European Zoological Journal, 91(1), 75-80. https://doi.org/10.1080/24750263.2023.2294086

"The reuse of nests might be tied to a lack of secure sites and could be a strategic adaptation to save time and energy in specific conditions."

AMAZING EXPERIMENTS IN ORNITHOLOGY

Novel Method in Avian Nest Classification



Great Tit (*Parus major*) © Air Institute

Osprey (*Pandion hallaetus*) © Charlie Marshall via Flickr

In the realm of ornithology, the preservation of bird habitats is increasingly critical as climate change poses significant threats to avian species. A recent study has introduced an innovative automated method for classifying bird nests, addressing the challenges faced by researchers in manual identification. This approach harnesses the power of machine learning, particularly through advanced image processing techniques.

The methodology begins with a comprehensive image processing workflow that includes several enhancement techniques such as local contrast enhancement, sharpening, intensity adjustments, histogram equalization, and color thresholding. At the heart of this system is a sophisticated Convolutional Neural Network known as ResNet152 V2, which excels in feature extraction from bird nest images.

For the classification stage, a Support Vector Machine (SVM) is utilized, resulting in impressive performance metrics. The combination of ResNet152 V2 and kernel SVM has shown exceptional accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score, marking a significant advancement in the ability to classify avian nests in India. This automated approach not only minimizes human involvement in image analysis but also serves as a crucial tool for conservationists dedicated to safeguarding avian habitats.

Looking ahead, researchers aim to develop a specialized bird nest detection system, further enhancing wildlife conservation efforts. This groundbreaking method represents a substantial leap forward in ornithological research, offering a reliable solution to the challenges of manual image analysis and aiding in the conservation of endangered bird species.

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Reference:

Aggarwal, K., Nithya, E., Jose, N. N., Arya, A., Kathirvel, M., & Kande, S. (2024, April). Bird Nest Chronicles: A Novel Method for Avian Nest Classification Using Machine Learning. In 2024 10th International Conference on Communication and Signal Processing (ICCSP) (pp. 300-305). IEEE.
https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/10543445

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Underreported Bird Fatalities from Building Collisions: A Call for National Action

A Bird Dies from Colliding with Chicago Building — Photo: Pat Nabong/Sun-Times

Recent research published in PLOS One reveals that bird deaths from building collisions in the U.S. have been significantly underestimated, with figures miscalculated by hundreds of millions annually. Previous studies primarily counted birds found dead or fatally injured at crash sites. However, many birds that survive the initial impact die later due to injuries or predation.

The study highlights the urgent need for the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to enhance protection measures for vulnerable bird populations. Artificial lighting from buildings at night disorients birds, leading to collisions, while daytime reflections can also be misleading. Territorial behavior during breeding seasons may further increase these incidents.

Most collisions occur with low-rise buildings, exacerbated by rising light pollution. Earlier research suggested over 80% of collisions were immediately fatal, but recent findings indicate that many birds perish away from the crash site. A 2022 study reported only 7.2% of collision victims were found dead at the scene, suggesting previous estimates were significantly off.

Some regions have taken steps to mitigate the issue. For instance, London City in Canada has implemented legislation to reduce light pollution by regulating building lighting. However, the U.S. has been slow to act, and there is a push for federal agencies to address the problem more aggressively.

Data obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests from eight states, including New York and Pennsylvania, underscores the widespread nature of the issue. Despite the grim statistics, there is potential for improvement as more local authorities enforce responsible building practices. National legislation is deemed essential for substantial progress.

In the meantime, individuals can contribute by turning off lights at night and using window treatments like patterned stickers or physical barriers to prevent bird strikes, as recommended by Audubon Pennsylvania.

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Reference:

Kornreich, A., Partridge, D., Youngblood, M., & Parkins, K. (2024). Rehabilitation outcomes of bird-building collision victims in the Northeastern United States. PloS one, 19(8), e0306362.
https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0306362

964 birds die from colliding with McCormick Place Lakeside Center in Chicago in just one night during height of migration season —
Photo: Daryl Coldren/Field Museum

Exploring Cancer Susceptibility in Birds: Evolutionary Trade-offs

Cancer affects virtually all multicellular organisms, birds included. A new study highlights the trade-off between investment in reproduction and DNA maintenance. Birds laying larger numbers of eggs have less resources available to ensure the integrity of their DNA, leaving them more vulnerable to cancer. Credit: Jason Drees

A comprehensive study has unveiled intriguing connections between reproductive patterns and cancer susceptibility in birds. Analyzing over 5,700 bird necropsies from 108 species, the study found that birds producing more eggs per clutch are more prone to cancer. This highlights evolutionary trade-offs between reproduction and survival, offering insights into health across species.

Birds, unlike mammals, exhibit lower cancer rates, prompting investigations into their cancer resistance strategies. By understanding these mechanisms, researchers aim to develop new cancer prevention and treatment strategies for humans.

The study, involving experts in evolutionary biology, veterinary medicine, and cancer research, emphasizes the limited energy resources available to organisms. Birds with higher reproductive rates allocate more energy to reproduction, potentially increasing disease susceptibility. Life history theory suggests that species with extensive reproductive investments may have less energy for DNA repair, heightening cancer risk.

Interestingly, no significant correlation was found between body size or lifespan and cancer risk in birds, aligning with "Peto's paradox," where larger, long-lived animals often show lower cancer rates. Previous studies on large mammals like whales and elephants have explored sophisticated cancer suppression strategies, offering potential insights for human cancer research.

The research highlights a potential trade-off between reproduction and cancer defenses, particularly in birds with larger clutch sizes. Other factors, such as incubation length and physical differences between sexes, showed no significant association with cancer prevalence.

The findings underscore the link between reproductive investment and disease risk. Advanced statistical methods accounted for evolutionary relationships among bird species, suggesting optimal cancer defense levels for different ecological niches. Data were gathered from necropsies at zoological institutions over 25 years, focusing on birds in human care.

Future research will explore molecular mechanisms behind clutch size and cancer risk, ecological influences on wild bird populations, and cancer prevention in species with low cancer rates. These insights could impact the care and conservation of bird species, with zoos and wildlife centers considering cancer screening for species with larger clutch sizes. Conservation efforts for endangered birds may also benefit from incorporating cancer risk into population health management.

This research underscores the value of evolutionary perspectives in cancer biology, potentially uncovering new prevention and treatment strategies applicable to both human and veterinary medicine.

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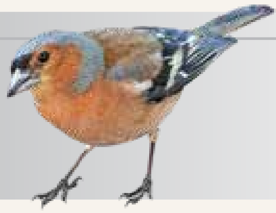
Kapsetaki, S. E., Compton, Z. T., Dolan, J., Harris, V. K., Mellon, W., Rupp, S. M., & Maley, C. C. (2024). Life history traits and cancer prevalence in birds. Evolution, Medicine, and Public Health, 12(1), 105-116. https://academic.oup.com/emph/article/12/1/105/7700206

PALEO-ORNITHOLOGY



Toothless Avian Anomaly: A New Insight into Early Bird Evolution

An illustration of the fossil skeleton of the new bird species *Imparavis attenboroughi* and a reconstruction of what the animal would have looked like in flight. © Ville Sinkkonen

A new species of prehistoric bird, dating back 120 million years, has been uncovered in China, offering fresh insights into avian evolution from dinosaur ancestors. This species, named for its unique characteristics, lacked teeth—a trait uncommon among its contemporaries. This discovery sharpens our understanding of how modern birds evolved toothlessness.

The bird belongs to the enantiornithines, known as "opposite birds," due to their distinct shoulder joints. This find pushes back the timeline for toothlessness in this group by nearly 48 million years. Previously, this trait was believed to have appeared around 70 million years ago.

Discovered by an amateur fossil hunter in northeastern China, the skeleton stood out due to its unusual forelimbs, featuring a prominent bicipital crest. Such features were previously seen only in birds from the Late Cretaceous. This prompted further investigation, revealing independently moving "fingers" and strong wing bones, suggesting powerful wing beats.

The bird's diet remains speculative, as its toothless beak provides few clues. Unlike modern birds, it lacked a gizzard and did not ingest grit for digestion. Its feeding habits might have resembled ground-foraging birds, suggesting a unique diet among enantiornithines.

The extinction of enantiornithines alongside dinosaurs, while ornithuromorphs survived, remains a mystery. Continued research on such specimens may illuminate this evolutionary path.

This discovery is part of a broader effort to understand avian history, emphasizing the importance of conservation and the impact of environmental changes on species survival.

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Reference:

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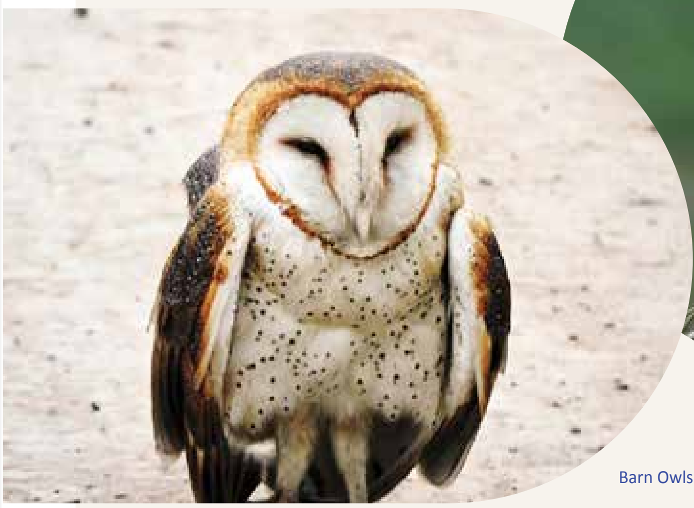
ETHNO-ORNITHOLOGY

Ethno-Ornithological and Entomological Practices in Abeokuta, Egbaland (Nigeria)

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
© 2009 Alta Oosthuizen/Shutterstock



Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) © Zavala Leyva Gabriel

In Abeokuta, Egbaland, indigenous understanding of insects and birds highlights their environmental and cultural importance. This knowledge reflects a broader ethnobiological framework that examines human interactions with biological resources. In this context, insects, like bees, are used for skin treatments and beeswax production, while centipedes are processed for treating snake bites and joint pains. Grasshoppers aid in addressing kidney issues and intestinal disorders, and crickets and termites serve both nutritional and medicinal purposes.

Birds play vital roles in cultural practices. Feathers are significant in rituals and adornments. The cattle egret symbolizes purification, chickens provide sustenance and are integral to religious offerings, and cranes are involved in spiritual ceremonies. Doves act as messengers, and goose oil helps treat baldness and ear ailments. Heron fat serves as a sedative, while guinea fowl sounds deter pests.

Birds, such as cattle egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) and barn owls (*Tyto alba*), assist in pest control within agricultural settings, promoting eco-friendly practices. Traditional beliefs incorporate avian elements in healing, with African grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*) enhancing knowledge. Partridge is linked to wealth and health benefits, aiding children's mobility and improving eyesight.

This ethno-zoological knowledge underscores the importance of preserving traditional practices amid modernization. It also highlights the integration of such practices with contemporary medicine, demonstrating the coexistence of traditional and modern healing methods in Nigeria. Understanding the cultural and ecological roles of these species supports biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management.

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CURRENT RESEARCH

Florida applesnail (Pomacea paludosa) © Joel Sartore

Biotic Interactions Drive Northward Expansion of Snail Kite in Florida

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) © Ron R Bielefeld

Recent research has unveiled the role of biotic factors in the northward range expansion of the Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) in Florida, challenging traditional views on species distribution. This expansion, approximately 175 km north from previous boundaries, contradicts the Eltonian Noise Hypothesis, which emphasizes abiotic factors as primary drivers at larger geographic scales (De Araújo, et al., 2014).

The invasive island apple snail *Pomacea maculata*, now abundant throughout Florida, has significantly influenced the Snail Kite's distribution. Despite the continued presence of the smaller native Florida apple snail *Pomacea paludosa*, the kites have increasingly consumed the larger invasive species. This dietary shift has coincided with notable morphological changes, particularly an increase in bill size among kites in northern regions, expanding their biotic suitability.

Ecological niche models employing algorithms like Maxent, generalized linear models, and ellipsoids indicated stable climatic conditions over time, suggesting climate is not a limiting factor. Instead, the kites' historical patchy northern presence is linked to suitable wetland availability. The study highlights a strong latitudinal cline, with bill size increasing with latitude, suggesting that morphological adaptation to the larger invasive apple snail has enhanced the kites' potential range.

This research underscores the significant impact of biotic interactions and phenotypic changes on distribution, providing a counterexample to the Eltonian Noise Hypothesis. It offers a framework for understanding how specialized predators can extend their range through novel biotic interactions, emphasizing the need for comprehensive occurrence datasets to explore these dynamics further.

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Impact of Sea-Level Rise on Red Knot Populations in Northwest Mexico

Rufa Red Knot, *Calidris canutus roselaari* © Gregory Breese/USFWS, Public Domain, *https://www.fws.gov/media/rufa-red-knot-0*

Recent investigations reveal that projected sea-level rise (SLR) poses a significant threat to coastal ecosystems and the migratory shorebird species, *Calidris canutus roselaari*, commonly known as the Red Knot, in Northwest Mexico. This region serves as a vital habitat for Nearctic breeding migratory shorebirds, yet its future viability is under scrutiny due to climate change.

By the year 2050, it is anticipated that SLR could result in substantial habitat degradation within coastal wetlands in this area. Utilizing species distribution modeling alongside moderate SLR inundation scenarios, researchers have identified that approximately 55% of the existing coastal wetland area may face permanent flooding. Furthermore, the quality of the remaining habitats is expected to decline by 20%, diminishing their suitability for the Red Knot.

Notably, eight out of ten wetlands that currently support significant populations of *Calidris canutus roselaari* are projected to experience an average reduction of 17.8% in their Highly Suitable Habitat (HSH), with two sites expected to lose all HSH entirely. These findings indicate that, in conjunction with escalating coastal development and human disturbances, SLR may lead to a contraction in the distribution of these shorebirds, exacerbating existing population declines.

The implications of SLR extend beyond the challenges faced by shorebirds; they highlight the urgent need for proactive measures in habitat management. It is essential for conservationists and resource managers to prioritize strategies that promote the resilience of coastal wetlands. This includes facilitating the inland migration of wetlands and implementing localized interventions to bolster both ecological and human adaptation to the effects of rising seas.

In conclusion, the projected impacts of climate-induced sea-level rise on Northwest Mexico's coastal wetlands necessitate immediate attention to safeguard the future of the Red Knot and other migratory shorebird species. Ensuring the integrity of these critical habitats is imperative for maintaining biodiversity and ecological balance in a rapidly changing environment.

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ANCIENT INSIGHTS

From Ancient Wonder to Modern Science: A History of Ornithology

Egyptian marshland hunting scene 1422–1411 BC © Maler der Grabkammer des Nacht - The Yorck Project (2002) 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei (DVD-ROM), distributed by DIRECTMEDIA Publishing GmbH. ISBN: 3936122202.

Ornithology, the study of birds, has traversed a fascinating journey from ancient wonder to modern scientific discipline. Its roots lie in ancient civilizations, where birds held profound symbolic significance in myths, legends, and folklore. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, considered the father of natural history, meticulously observed and documented bird behavior in his work "History of Animals," laying a foundation for future scientific inquiry.

However, ornithological studies during the Renaissance saw the emergence of naturalists who sought to classify and understand the natural world. Encyclopedias of the natural world, including those by William Turner, Pierre Belon, Konrad Gesner, and Ulysse Aldrovandi, attempted to catalog all known bird species. These works, while often verbose and containing anecdotal information, played a crucial role in establishing a framework for scientific understanding.

The seventeenth century marked a pivotal shift in ornithology. John Ray and Francis Willoughby's "Ornithology" rejected folklore and emphasized empirical observation and classification, marking a departure from previous works. Their work established two key branches of study: systematic ornithology, focused on naming, classifying, and mapping bird distribution, and natural history, which investigated behavior, ecology, and adaptation.

Charles Darwin's groundbreaking theories of evolution by natural selection and sexual selection in the mid-nineteenth century revolutionized ornithology. Darwin's ideas provided a unifying framework for understanding the diversity of birds and their adaptations. His concept of sexual selection, particularly male-male competition and female choice, offered explanations for the differences in appearance and behavior between male and female birds.

The nineteenth century also saw the establishment of major ornithological societies, including the International Ornithologists' Union (IOU), British Ornithologists' Union (BOU), the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU), and the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union (RAOU). These societies played a crucial role in promoting research and disseminating findings, fueling the growth of ornithological knowledge.

The early twentieth century witnessed a significant reunification of the two branches of ornithology. Erwin Stresemann, in Germany, and David Lack, in Britain, championed a more holistic approach, integrating systematics, behavior, ecology, and physiology. This shift was further fueled by the "modern synthesis" of evolutionary theory, which combined genetics with natural selection.

The study of birds has continued to expand, embracing a wide range of modern scientific disciplines. Research now delves into quantitative genetics, genomics, neurobiology, endocrinology, physiology, immunology, life history strategies, ecology, conservation, behavior, and evolution. This integration has led to a dramatic increase in our understanding of birds, but it has also revealed the vastness of knowledge yet to be uncovered.

While professional ornithologists have played a crucial role in advancing the field, amateur bird enthusiasts have also made significant contributions through monitoring studies, refining identification techniques, and documenting anecdotal observations that reveal broader patterns in avian behavior.

The history of ornithology illustrates the power of scientific inquiry and the importance of integrating diverse perspectives. The study of birds continues to provide valuable insights into the natural world, reminding us of the interconnectedness of all life on Earth.

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“Evolution the key to survival”

DISTINCT LINES

Unveiling Eggshell Mysteries

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*)
Newborn Chick Egg Gloucester MA Essex County© Kim Smith

Recent investigations into eggshell composition have revealed significant differences across various bird species, particularly between pigmented spots and plain regions. These findings are crucial for understanding the interplay between avian biology and environmental factors, with implications for ecotoxicology and developmental physiology.
The study demonstrated that pigment spots on eggshells consistently contain higher concentrations of minerals, such as carbon, lead, copper, chromium, and aluminum compared to adjacent plain areas. Notably, even in thinner eggshells from species, like gulls and terns, the spotted regions exhibit disproportionately higher concentrations of these elements, indicating a general rule across avian species.

The inner eggshell membrane emerges as a key factor influencing elemental composition. Research indicates that certain trace metals, including mercury, are concentrated in the membrane rather than in the hardened calcium-rich shell. For instance, previous studies found mercury concentrations significantly higher in the membrane of Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) than in the shell itself. This underscores the necessity of including the membrane in assessments of eggshell thickness and elemental composition.

Environmental concerns related to trace element accumulation are particularly pertinent. Elevated concentrations of cadmium, lead, and copper were noted in eggs from Black-headed Gulls (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) nesting in industrial areas, highlighting the impact of habitat on elemental composition. Mediterranean Gulls (*Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*) exhibited notably high aluminum levels in pigment spots, suggesting a potential accumulation of toxins in specific regions of the eggshell.
The study emphasizes the importance of standardized sampling procedures, as the stark differences between spotted and plain regions necessitate careful consideration in future research.
These findings contribute vital insights into the structural and ecological functions of eggshell pigmentation. By clarifying the relationship between coloration and chemical composition, this research opens new avenues for the study of avian biology and environmental science, enriching the understanding of bird physiology and the impacts of environmental pollutants.

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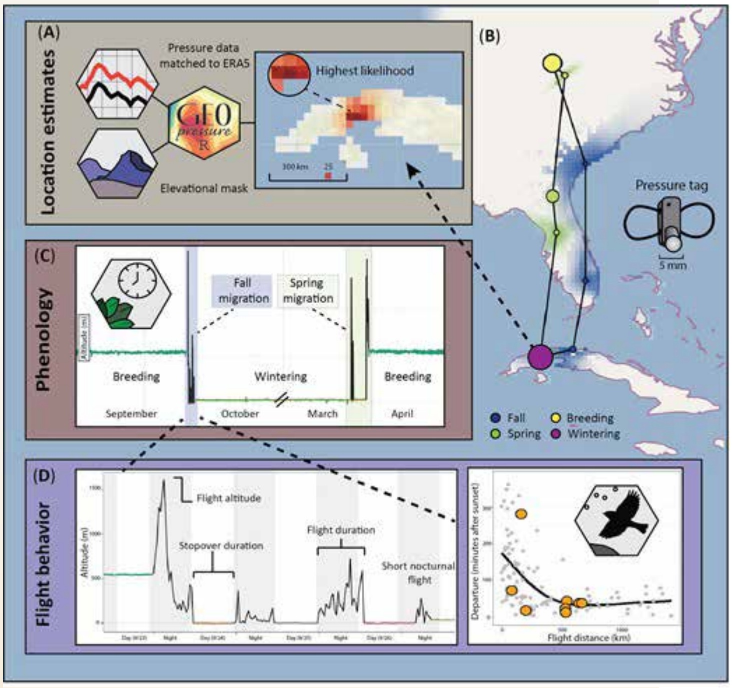
NEW TOOLS IN ORNITHOLOGY

Innovative Barometric Geolocation Tools Transform Small Bird Migration Studies

Recent advancements in technology have significantly enhanced the ability to track migratory birds during their annual life cycles, a critical aspect of ornithological research. Among these innovations, barometric pressure geolocators, also known as pressure tags, have emerged as powerful tools for studying small avian species weighing less than 25 grams. The newly developed geolocation methodology, termed GeoPressureR, leverages global weather analysis datasets alongside Hidden Markov movement models (Hidden Markov models HMMs) and their extensions are attractive methods for analysing ecological data where noisy, multivariate measurements are made of a hidden, ecological process, and where this hidden process is represented by a sequence of discrete states (Brett et al., 2020) to provide superior accuracy in determining bird locations compared to traditional lightweight tracking devices, such as light level geolocators, automated radio telemetry, and archival GPS tags. Notably, pressure data not only facilitates precise location tracking but also captures altitude information and detailed flight behaviors, including migratory timing and patterns.

This technology addresses critical unresolved questions in avian ecology, including altitudinal migration, usage of stopover sites, molt migration, vertical airspace interactions, and the factors influencing the initiation, duration, and direction of migratory flights. A case study involving a Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) fitted with a pressure tag in Virginia, USA, exemplifies the method's efficacy. This research uncovered the bird's complete migratory journey to Cuba, detailing its wintering and stopover sites with remarkable precision.

While the deployment of pressure tags holds great promise, challenges remain, particularly concerning the recovery of devices for data retrieval and the application to species with extensive aerial movements, such as swallows and swifts. Nevertheless, the widespread implementation of barometric geolocators is poised to yield unprecedented insights into avian migration and aerial behavior, contributing to conservation efforts and enriching the overall understanding of bird movement ecology.



Graphical Abstract © Garrett S Rhyne

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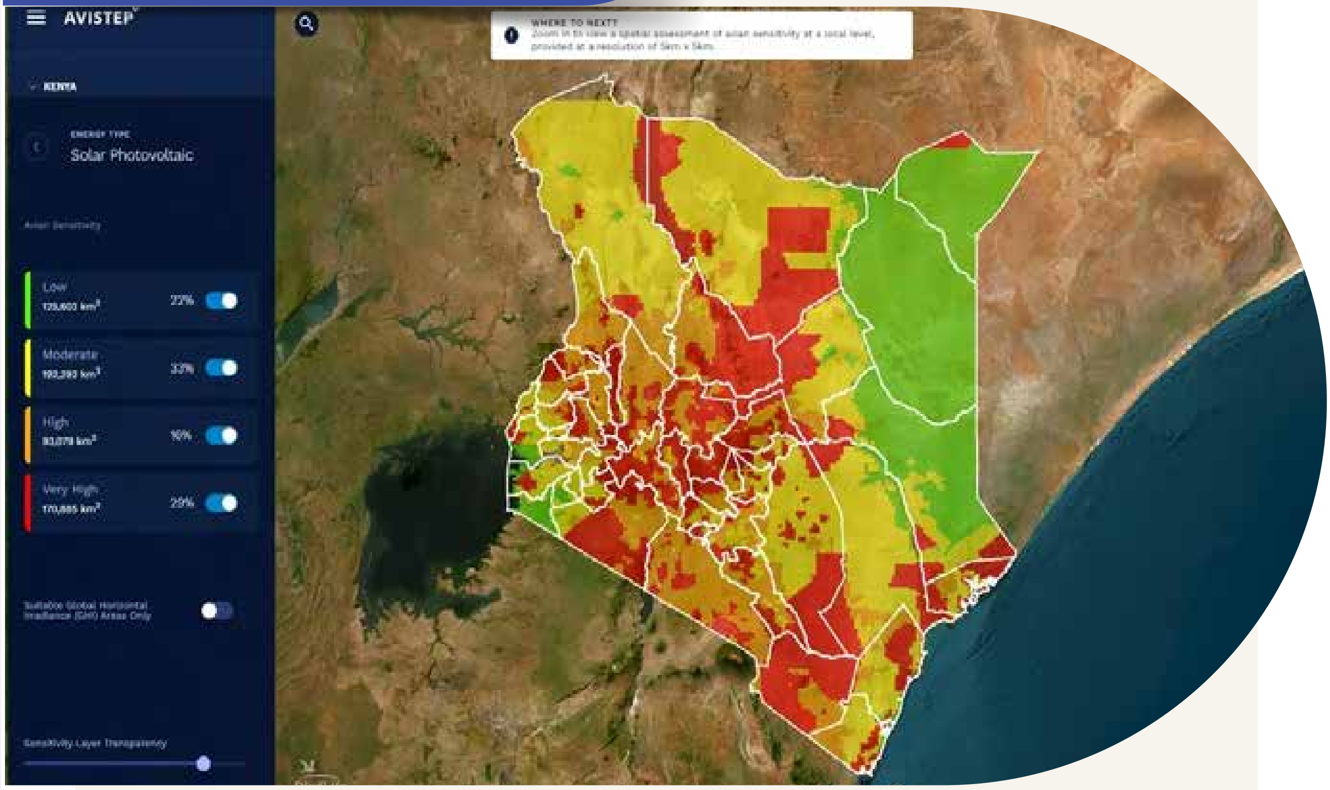
Innovative Tool Mitigates Bird Collisions Along Global Flyways



Sensitivity levels for solar photovoltaic energy in Kenya as shown in AVISTEP

BirdLife International, in collaboration with DEG Impulse (a subsidiary of the German Development Finance Institution DEG) has introduced AVISTEP, an energy planning tool deployed in four additional countries: Egypt, Kenya, Laos, and Uzbekistan. This open-access resource aims to protect migratory birds by assisting developers and regulators in identifying locations where renewable energy infrastructure (for example – windmills and solar) may pose risks to avian species.

The urgent need for a transition to renewable energy is underscored by the escalating climate crisis and the concurrent biodiversity emergency. However, prioritizing energy production without considering ecological impacts could result in significant habitat and species loss. Such habitat degradation may release approximately 415 million tons of carbon, counteracting the climate benefits of renewable energy initiatives.

AVISTEP addresses these challenges by providing essential data to minimize negative outcomes for biodiversity. The recent expansion into Egypt, Kenya, Laos, and Uzbekistan highlights the growing energy infrastructure in these regions, which are home to diverse and potentially vulnerable bird populations.

In Uzbekistan, the Uzbekistan Society for the Protection of Birds (UzSPB) has conducted surveys on Central Asian Flyway species at risk from poorly situated renewable projects. Powerlines threaten species, such as bustards, while wind turbines endanger raptors, including the Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*) and Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*). The vulnerability of large soaring birds to human-made structures, resulting in collisions and electrocutions, poses a significant conservation challenge.

Egypt and Kenya play crucial roles in the African-Eurasian Flyway, serving as key stopover points for migratory soaring birds. The geographical context, characterized by proximity to the Red Sea and the Great Rift Valley, creates bottlenecks for avian species migrating from Northern Europe and Asia to Africa. The behaviors of soaring birds, which involve slow migration, increase their susceptibility to collisions with power lines and wind turbines, further compounding existing threats, such as poisoning and hunting.

In Laos, the rapid expansion of hydropower presents unique challenges for migratory birds, like the Asian Openbill (*Anastomus oscitans*), which may encounter hazards from power lines extending from hydropower stations. AVISTEP aims to safeguard these migration routes by mitigating risks associated with new infrastructure.

The tool allows users to visualize the impact of wind energy, solar energy, and power lines on bird species throughout the countries where it is implemented. By utilizing a color-coded mapping system, users can assess the ecological status of specific areas, identifying whether they are protected or contain high-risk species. The findings can be easily shared in a PDF format.

AVISTEP is now accessible for public use across Egypt, India, Kenya, Laos, Nepal, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam, with plans for further expansion into additional countries. This initiative represents a significant advancement in the conservation of migratory birds, promoting sustainable energy development while safeguarding biodiversity. Access AVISTEP at *https://avistep.birdlife.org/*.

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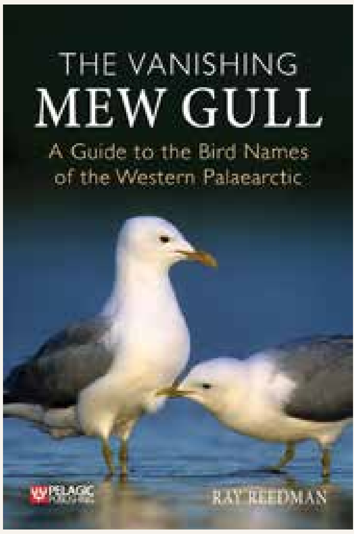
© Nick Upton

Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) © Adobe Stock

BOOK REVIEWS

Unraveling Avian Nomenclature: A Review of "The Vanishing Mew Gull"

Ray Reedman's "The Vanishing Mew Gull: A Guide to the Bird Names of the Western Palaearctic" serves as an essential resource for ornithologists and bird enthusiasts alike. This comprehensive dictionary meticulously documents both vernacular and scientific names of nearly 1,100 bird species within the Western Palaearctic.



The book begins with an insightful introduction that contextualizes the linguistic evolution of bird names across major European languages. Reedman adeptly navigates the complexities arising from modern genetic studies that have led to significant taxonomic revisions, offering clarity in what can often appear to be a confusing nomenclature landscape.

Each entry is presented systematically, providing not only the names but also supplementary information on species status, appearance, and historical context.

The structured format includes sections dedicated to various bird families, from wildfowl and gamebirds to finches and larks, making it easy for readers to locate specific information. The inclusion of glossaries, organizational acronyms, and an index of both vernacular and scientific names further enhances the book's usability as a reference tool.

Reedman's work addresses a critical gap in the literature by providing a detailed examination of the origins and meanings behind bird names, while also highlighting the errors and misunderstandings that have historically persisted. This book is indispensable for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of ornithological etymology and the rich tapestry of names that accompany the avian world of the Western Palaearctic.

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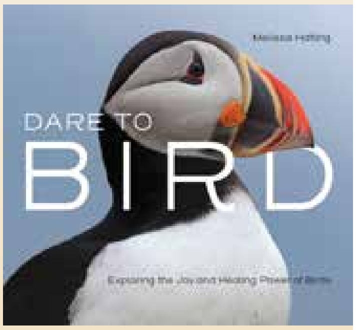
Book available at:
https://pelagicpublishing.com/collections/new-books/products/the-vanishing-mew-gull?variant=43701932064939

An Insightful Examination of Avian Conservation and Personal Healing – "Dare to Bird"

"Dare to Bird," authored by Melissa Hafting and published by Rocky Mountain Books, is a significant contribution to the field of ornithology and environmental advocacy. This book features a comprehensive collection of bird photographs, documenting a range of species from common birds in Canada to unique endemics in Hawaii. Hafting's photographic expertise effectively captures the behaviors and habitats of these species, appealing to both experienced birders and those new to the field.



The book also addresses the author's personal journey through grief and depression after the loss of her parents. She reflects on how birding served as a source of solace and healing, adding a personal dimension to the narrative that underscores the therapeutic potential of engagement with nature.

As an ecologist, Hafting discusses critical conservation issues affecting bird populations, including threats to species, like the endangered Spotted Owl. Her call for policy changes at federal and provincial levels is both urgent and well-reasoned, accompanied by practical suggestions for individual contributions to bird conservation.

Additionally, Hafting highlights the need for inclusivity within the birding community. Her advocacy for a more welcoming environment for diverse participants is a notable aspect of her work, aligning the book with contemporary social concerns.

"Dare to Bird" effectively merges personal narrative with scientific inquiry and conservation advocacy, making it a valuable resource for anyone interested in birds and their preservation.

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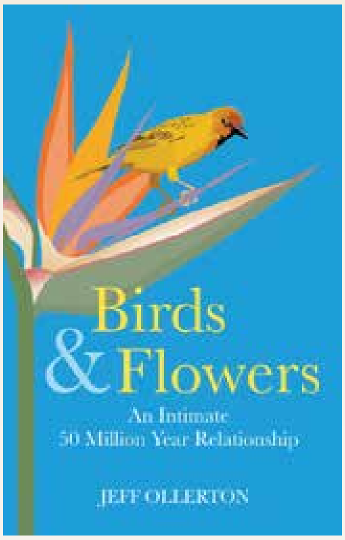
Book available at:
https://rmbooks.com/products/dare-to-bird

The Intricate Dance of Pollination: A Review of "Birds and Flowers"



"Birds and Flowers" written by Jeff Ollerton presents a compelling exploration of the intricate relationships between avian species and flowering plants, tracing their connection over a remarkable 50 million years. The book serves as a significant contribution to the understanding of pollination, detailing the vital role that birds play as pollinators across diverse ecosystems.

Ollerton meticulously discusses the evolutionary implications of these interactions, revealing how approximately 1,390 bird species engage with countless plant varieties. This work not only debunks prevalent myths surrounding bird pollinators but also highlights the ecological significance of their partnerships with flowers. The author illuminates the sophisticated lives of pollinating birds, emphasizing their dependence on flowers for sustenance and reproductive success, while also addressing the dependence of plants on birds for pollination.

The narrative is enriched by a thorough examination of the threats facing these relationships, including habitat destruction, climate change, and disease. Ollerton does not shy away from discussing the extinction of certain bird species and the potential impacts on floral reproduction, yet he balances this somber reality with optimistic accounts of conservation efforts aimed at restoring these crucial ecological connections.

With a well-structured table of contents guiding the reader through various themes—ranging from the origins of bird-flower partnerships to the cultural implications of these interactions—the book is both informative and engaging. The author's passion for the subject is evident in his writing, making complex scientific concepts accessible to a broader audience, while retaining the rigor expected in scholarly discourse.

Birds and Flowers is an essential read for those interested in ecology, evolution, and conservation. It provides a nuanced perspective on the interdependence of species and serves as a clarion call for the preservation of these vital relationships in the face of modern challenges.

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Book available at:
https://pelagicpublishing.com/collections/new-books/products/birds-and-flowers

MOVIES

Vanishing Voices: A Documentary on the Fight for Hawaiian Honeycreepers

Hawaiian honeycreepers are in dire straits, facing a critical conservation crisis largely due to non-native mosquitoes that transmit avian diseases. To shed light on these challenges and the efforts to combat them, the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and Hyperspective, (*https://hyperspective.com/*) led by Todd Robertson, have produced a compelling documentary titled Vanishing Voices. This 30-minute film showcases the groundbreaking work of the Birds, Not Mosquitoes (BNM) partnership, which is dedicated to saving these unique birds from extinction.

The documentary delves into the innovative Incompatible Insect Technique (IIT), a method that utilizes naturally occurring bacteria to suppress mosquito populations. By highlighting the tireless efforts of BNM, Vanishing Voices empowers viewers with knowledge and emphasizes the importance of reconnecting with Hawaii's native forests and songbirds.

Through interviews with field teams actively working on Maui and Kaua'i, the film paints a poignant picture of the plight of the honeycreepers. Hawaii has been dubbed the "extinction capital of the world," having lost over 70% of its native forest birds. The introduction of mosquitoes in the 1800s triggered a wave of avian malaria, devastating local bird populations that had evolved in isolation without defenses against such diseases.

The film captures the emotional toll of conservation work as dedicated teams witness the decline of individual species. One particularly moving story is that of a bird named P, who symbolizes resilience amid adversity. Despite the loss of her companions, she continues to build nests, embodying the hope that remains in this fight for survival.

Vanishing Voices also highlights the logistical challenges of mosquito control in Hawaii's rugged terrain. The IIT method involves breeding male mosquitoes in a lab and dispersing them via helicopter across remote areas. Each week, approximately 500,000 male mosquitoes are released, aiming to overwhelm wild populations and reduce breeding success. While the project has faced opposition, with some environmental groups legally challenging the release of mosquitoes, the filmmakers present a compelling argument for the necessity of such measures. The documentary emphasizes that without effective mosquito control, efforts to save the honeycreepers will ultimately fail.

The voices of Hawaii's younger generations also resonate throughout the film. Students have taken up the cause, advocating for the protection of their native birds and participating in legislative discussions. This grassroots involvement highlights a growing awareness and urgency to preserve Hawaii's unique biodiversity.

Vanishing Voices serves not only as an educational tool but also as a call to action. It aims to bridge knowledge gaps, foster empathy, and inspire community participation in conservation efforts. The vision presented is one where, upon stepping outside, residents can hear the songs of native forest birds—a sound that has become increasingly rare in modern Hawaii. As the documentary unfolds, it reveals that the restoration of Hawaii's ecosystems and the survival of its native birds is not just a local issue but a reflection of global environmental challenges. The fight against avian malaria and the mosquitoes that spread it is emblematic of broader struggles faced by species worldwide.

Vanishing Voices is a heartfelt exploration of the intersection between culture, conservation, and community in Hawaii. It underscores the shared responsibility to protect these irreplaceable creatures and advocates for a future where the chorus of native birds once again fills the islands, enriching the lives of all who call Hawaii home.

Watch the film at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOo5yAAQOFk&t=1555s.

NOTICEBOARD

CONFERENCES

2025

DATE	EVENT	FOR MORE INFORMATION
January 6- 9, 2025	The Waterbird Society and Pacific Seabird Group Joint Meeting, San Jose, Costa Rica	https://psg.wildapricot.org/Annual-Meeting
March 25-29, 2025	International Conference on Palearctic Steppe Birds: ecology and conservation challenges, Ciudad Real, Spain	https://steppebirds.com/index.php
May 13-16, 2025	Oceania Bird Symposium, Noumea, New Caledonia	https://oceaniaseabirds2025.com/
June 1-3, 2025	NZ Bird Conference, Nelson, New Zealand	https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/nz-bird-conference-draft/
October 14-18, 2025	2025 Annual Meeting of the Raptor Research Foundation, San Jose, Costa Rica	https://raptorresearchfoundation.org/events/
Nov 18, 2025	BOU autumn 2025 conference, Natural History Museum, London	https://bou.org.uk/event/a-day-at-the-museum-bouasm25/
2026		
September 7-10, 2026	4th World Seabird Conference in Hobart, Tasmania	https://worldseabirdunion.org/world-seabird-conference/

Be Sure to Register in Time

COURSES, WORKSHOPS, AND WEBINARS

VENUE & COURSE / WORKSHOP DETAILS	FOR MORE INFORMATION
Aves Argentinas - Courses	https://www.avesargentinas.org.ar/cursos
Bird Alliance - Courses and Workshops	https://birdalliance.in/ba-category/courses-workshops/
Bird Banding Opportunities	https://www.westernbirdbanding.org/bird-banding-opportunities
Bird Identification and Survey - Courses	http://www.earthquestcanada.ca/Birdcourses.htm
Bird Identification online course	https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/training/online-courses/bird-identification-online-course/
Bird Keeping (Aviculture)	https://www.acs.edu.au/courses/bird-keeping-aviculture-707.aspx
Bird Language Online Courses	https://www.naturaliststudies.com/bird-language-courses
Bird Monitoring and Banding Workshops	https://rpbo.org/what-we-do/training/bird-monitoring-and-banding-workshop/
Birds Canada Workshops and Webinars	https://www.birdscanada.org/discover-birds/training-and-workshops
Birds Queensland bird identification courses	https://birdsqueensland.org.au/activities/courses/
BlackAFinSTEM - Webinars	https://www.blackafinstem.com/virtual-2023
British Trust for Ornithology Workshops	https://www.bto.org/community/events
Field Studies Council - Courses	https://www.field-studies-council.org/courses-and-experiences/subjects/birds-courses/
Hummingbird Banding	https://donorbox.org/hbjuly29
IBP-facilitated Beginner and Advanced banding classes	https://www.birdpop.org/pages/birdBandingClasses.php
IBP-facilitated Beginner and Advanced banding classes	https://www.birdpop.org/pages/birdBandingClasses.php
ITEC Birding Program	https://itec-edu.org/itec-birding-program/
NABC Banding Workshop and Certification in Belize	https://www.ecorana.ca/bird-banding-apprenticeship/
Nature Trails and Workshops - Bombay Natural History Society	https://www.bnhs.org/nature-trails
Raptor Research Foundation Workshops	https://raptorresearchfoundation.org/current-conference/workshops/
Training Directory: Identification and Field Survey Skills - Ornithology Short Courses	https://www.countryside-jobs.com/training/identification-and-field-survey-skills-ornithology
Vancouver Avian Research Centre - Workshops	https://www.birdvancouver.com/bird-identification-workshop/
WildResearch Workshops	https://wildresearch.ca/training/

For more information, visit

https://ornithologyexchange.org/forums/forum/151-workshops-short-courses-and-other-training-opportunities/

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

DETAILS	FOR MORE INFORMATION
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies - Job Opportunities	https://www.birdconservancy.org/about-us/employment/
Birder Certification and jobs	https://birdercertification.org/birding-projects.php
BirdLife International - Careers	https://www.birdlife.org/careers-hub/
Birds Canada Job opportunities	https://www.birdscanada.org/about-us/job-opportunities
Bombay Natural History Society Jobs	https://www.bnhs.org/career
Careers in Ecology and Ornithology - UK and Ireland	https://www.rpsgroup.com/consulting-uki/careers-in-ecology-and-ornithology/
Conservation Job Board	https://www.conservationjobboard.com/
Cornell Lab of Ornithology Job Opportunities	https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/jobs/#staff
Delta Waterfowl - Job Board	https://deltawaterfowl.org/careers/
ECO Canada - Ornithology jobs	https://eco.ca/new-practitioners/employment-support/job-board/
Ecological Society of America Jobs	https://www.esacareercenter.org/
Environmental Science Careers and Other Green Jobs	https://jobs.environmentalscience.org/
National Audubon Society - Job Opportunities	https://careers-audubon.icims.com/jobs/
National Wildlife Federation - Job Board	https://www.nwf.org/Home/About-Us/Careers
Natural Resources Job Board	https://wfscjobs.tamu.edu/job-board/
Ornithological Societies of North America - Job Board	https://www.bioblogia.net/2012/11/jobs-for-ornithologists-osna.html
Ornithology Exchange Job Board	https://ornithologyexchange.org/jobs/board/
Pacific Seabird Group Job Postings	https://pacificseabirdgroup.org/category/news/job-postings/
Sálim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) - Job Board	https://www.sacon.in/careers/
Society for Conservation Biology Job Board	https://careers.conbio.org/jobs/avian-ornithology/
The Wildlife Society Career Center	https://careers.wildlife.org/home/
Wild Bird Trust - Careers	https://www.wildbirdtrust.com/careers/all
Work Cabin - Conservation Job Board	https://www.workcabin.ca/

For more information, visit

https://ornithologyexchange.org/jobs/board/

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

AAV Wild Bird Health Research Fund from the Association of Avian Veterinarians supports research projects that have a direct impact on the health and welfare of wild birds. The award amount is up to $5,000 and the application deadline is 1 February each year. https://www.aav.org/page/research

ABC Conservation Awards from the African Bird Club support small and medium-sized bird conservation projects in Africa. Applicants should normally be resident in Africa. The award amount is up to £1,500 and the application deadlines are 28 February, 30 June, and 31 October each year.
https://www.africanbirdclub.org/conservation/awards

ABC Expedition Award from the African Bird Club supports expeditions that take place within continental Africa or adjacent islands, with a strong base in conservation and birds. The award amount is up to £2,000 and the application deadlines are 28 February, 30 June, and 31 October each year.
https://www.africanbirdclub.org/conservation/expeditions

The **Atlas Fund Scholarships** are travel grants offered by the Québec Breeding Bird Atlas to experienced volunteer birdwatchers who survey remote squares in northern Québec. The amount granted for a project usually varies between $1,000 and $3,000. https://www.quebecoiseaux.org/fr/fonds-atlas

Birds Australia Research Grants from BirdLife Australia support research projects that contribute to the conservation of Australian birds and their habitats. The award amount ranges from $1,000 to $5,000 and the application deadline is 31 March each year. https://birdlife.org.au/who-we-are/our-organisation/grants

Conference attendance grants from the BOU support students and early career researchers to attend international ornithological conferences. The award amount is up to £500 and the application deadlines vary depending on the conference. https://bou.org.uk/funding/conference-attendance-grants/

Colorado Field Ornithologists Youth Scholarships provide financial help to young Colorado birders to attend summer camps, workshops, and training programs that introduce them to science and nature through the study of birds. Scholarships typically range from $200-$800.
https://cobirds.org/grants-scholarships/#application-information

Craig S. Harrison Conservation Fund - to advance the conservation of seabirds by providing funds or supplies to individuals from developing countries as well as those from elsewhere working in those developing countries primarily in or bordering the Pacific Ocean.
https://pacificseabirdgroup.org/grants/general-instructions/

The **E. Alexander Bergstrom Memorial Research Award** from the Association of Field Ornithologists (AFO) supports field studies of birds by helping to support research or analyses. The award amount is up to $2,500 and the application deadline is 15 February each year. https://afonet.org/grants-awards/bergstrom-award/

Holsworth Wildlife Research Endowment from the Ecological Society of Australia supports postgraduate students to conduct research in ecology, wildlife management, and natural history studies. The award amount is up to $7,500 and the application deadlines are 31 March and 31 August each year.
https://www.ecolsoc.org.au/awards-and-prizes/holsworth-wildlife-research-endowment

In collaboration with The International Ornithologists' Union (IOU), Hunan Global Messenger Technology Co., Ltd (Henceforth 'Global Messenger') is offering the **Global Messenger Equipment Grants** for animal tracking equipment to bird researchers. Each grant is for five tracking devices, which researchers may select from the current list of tracking devices available. Each grant will amount to approximately $5000 in retail value.
https://ousurvey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5iPqYhWkhyXPCHI

The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund supports projects that focus on individual species conservation initiatives, recognize leaders in the field, and elevate the importance of species in the broader conservation debate. The award amount is up to $25,000 and the application deadlines are 28 February, 30 June, and 31 October each year. https://www.speciesconservation.org/grants/

Norman Wettenhall Foundation Small Environmental Grant Scheme supports groups or individuals undertaking projects that will make a positive difference to the natural living environment in Australia. The award amount is up to $10,000 and the application deadlines are quarterly. https://nwf.org.au/grants/small-environmental-grants/

The Oregon Fund for Ornithology is a grant program that supports projects related to the study, education, and conservation of birds and birding in Oregon. The fund offers up to $1,000 for each project that aligns with OBA's mission. https://oregonbirding.org/oregon-fund-for-ornithology/

OSME Conservation Fund from the Ornithological Society of the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia supports bird conservation projects in the OSME region, which includes parts of East Asia such as Mongolia, China, and Japan. The award amount is up to £2,000 and the application deadlines are 31 January and 31 July each year. https://osme.org/grants/conservation-fund/

Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation support small nature/biodiversity conservation projects and pilot programs in developing countries. The award amount is up to £8,000 and the application deadline is continuous. https://www.rufford.org/apply-for-grant

Each year the **Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology (SNVB)** provides one scholarship of up to $1000 to an undergraduate or graduate student conducting vertebrate research within the geographic scope of the society: northwestern North America west of the Great Plains and north of the Mojave Desert. SNVB is offering two $1000 scholarships now. http://thesnvb.org/scholarship/

Student Research Grant seeks to aid student-led research in the promotion of up-and-coming scholar members of the Pacific Seabird Group. The PSG Student Research Grant typically funds at least three grants, one grant per degree level (bachelor, master, doctoral). Past grant awards were between $500 and $1000. https://pacificseabirdgroup.org/student-research-grant/

Texas Ornithological Society awards research grants each year to researchers and graduate students studying the birds of Texas. https://www.texasbirds.org/about-tos/grants/

The Tropical Biology Association Small Grant Scheme supports TBA alumni groups to assist them with their conservation projects and to strengthen their proficiency in natural resource management and research. They are particularly interested in innovative ideas and approaches that will lead to real outcomes. The award amount is up to £2,300 and the application deadline is 30 April each year. https://www.tropical-biology.org/opportunities/tba-small-grants/

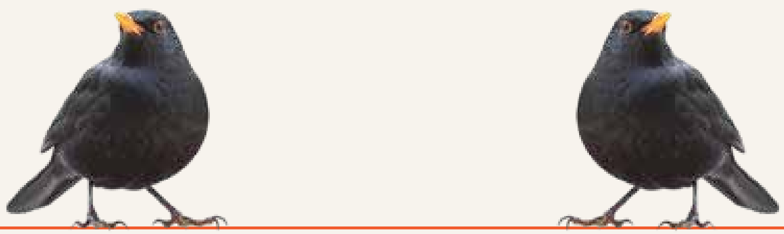
The Waterbird Society awards grants for research in the science and conservation of waterbirds. https://waterbirds.org/research-grants/

Western Bird Banding Association offers up to two $500-1,000 grants each year, usually one for research and the other for monitoring, for individuals and/or organizations engaged in projects in the New World using marked birds. https://www.westernbirdbanding.org/research-grants

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology sponsors several grants to support ornithological research by students and professionals, promote the study of birds by youth, enhance our knowledge of Wisconsin wetlands, and implement shorebird management activities. https://wsobirds.org/what-we-do/grants

The Yukon Bird Club Conservation Scholarship is an annual award of $500 for a Yukon University student who demonstrates interest and motivation in environmental conservation related to birds and their habitats. https://yukonbirds.ca/yukon-bird-club-conservation-scholarship/

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a reasonably up-to-date database of recurring grants, awards, prizes, scholarships, fellowships, etc. in the field of ornithology. For more information, visit **https://ornithologyexchange.org/**



AWARDS

AMERICAS

The Andersen Memorial Award for Raptor Research is given by the Raptor Research Foundation to the best student oral and poster presentations at their annual meeting. The award can only be given to a student once per degree and the student must be the senior author and presenter of the paper or poster. The poster award receives $175 and 1 year of free membership to RRF. https://raptorresearchfoundation.org/grants-awards/andersen-memorial-award/

The James R. Koplin Travel Award is an award given by the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF) to up to six students who are the senior authors and presenters of a paper or poster to be presented at the RRF meeting for which travel funds are requested. The award includes up to $500 and a free 1-year membership to RRF. The application deadline is the same as the abstract submission deadline for the RRF meeting.
https://raptorresearchfoundation.org/grants-awards/koplin-travel-award/

The William Brewster Memorial Award is given each year to the author or coauthors of the most meritorious body of work on birds of the Western Hemisphere published during the past ten years.
https://americanornithology.org/awards-grants/awards-scholarships/william-brewster-memorial-award/

The Loye and Alden Miller Research Award is given for lifetime achievement in ornithological research.
https://americanornithology.org/awards-grants/awards-scholarships/loye-and-alden-miller-research-award/

The Elliott Coues Award recognizes outstanding and innovative contributions to ornithological research, regardless of the geographic location of the work.
https://americanornithology.org/awards-grants/awards-scholarships/elliott-coues-award/

The Ralph W. Schreiber Conservation Award recognizes extraordinary scientific contributions to the conservation, restoration, or preservation of birds and/or their habitats.
https://americanornithology.org/awards-grants/awards-scholarships/ralph-w-schreiber-conservation-award/

The CFO Awards are annual awards given by the Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO) to honor individuals and organizations for their service to Colorado's avian diversity. The awards are presented at the CFO annual convention, which will be held jointly with the Western Field Ornithologists (WFO). https://cobirds.org/awards/

The Doris Heustis Speirs Award is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding lifetime contributions to Canadian ornithology. https://www.sco-soc.ca/doris-heustis-speirs-award

The Jamie Smith Memorial Mentoring Award honors established ornithologists from academia, industry, non-government, or government agencies in recognition of excellence in mentoring a new generation of professional or amateur biologists. https://www.sco-soc.ca/jamie-smith-memorial-mentoring-award

The Early Career Researcher Award honors fledgling ornithologists from academia, industry, and non-government or government agencies who show strong potential for future leadership in Canadian ornithology.
https://www.sco-soc.ca/early-career-researcher-award

The Taverner Awards are awarded annually to those with limited or no access to major funding, regardless of professional status, who are undertaking ornithological work in Canada. https://www.sco-soc.ca/taverner-awards

The Franz Haffer Award is given to an individual who has made a significant and long-term contribution to the study of Neotropical birds. The award consists of a plaque and a lifetime membership to the Neotropical Ornithological Society (NOS). https://www.neotropicalornithology.org/franz-haffer-award/.

The John Terborgh Award is given to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the conservation of Neotropical birds and their habitats. The award consists of a plaque and a lifetime membership to the Neotropical Ornithological Society (NOS). https://www.neotropicalornithology.org/john-terborgh-award/.

The Ned K. Johnson Young Investigator Award is given to an early-career researcher who has made an outstanding contribution to the study of Neotropical birds. The award consists of a plaque, a cash prize, and a one-year membership to the Neotropical Ornithological Society (NOS).
https://www.neotropicalornithology.org/ned-k-johnson-young-investigator-award/.

The Neotropical Ornithological Society (NOS) Student Awards are given to students who present outstanding oral or poster presentations at the biennial Neotropical Ornithological Society (NOS) congress. The awards consist of certificates and cash prizes. https://www.neotropicalornithology.org/nos-student-awards/.

The F.M. Bailey Lifetime Achievement Award is an award given by the New Mexico Ornithological Society (NMOS) to recognize individuals who have made significant lifetime contributions to New Mexico's ornithological knowledge, the promotion of the value of birds, both aesthetic and economic, effective conservation of the state's avifauna, and/or the NMOS. http://www.nmbirds.org/fmbailey-award/

The Waterbird Society awards individuals for outstanding contributions to waterbird science, exemplary service to the Society, and students for excellence in presentations and assistance for travel to the annual meetings. https://waterbirds.org/awards/

EUROPE

The EOU Awards are awarded by the European Ornithologists' Union (EOU) to recognize outstanding contributions to ornithology in Europe. Some of the awards are the EOU Medal, the EOU Early Career Researcher Award, the EOU Outstanding Service Award, and the EOU Student Award. https://eounion.org/awards/.

The Marsh Awards for Ornithology are awarded by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to ornithological research, conservation, or communication in the UK or abroad. Some of the awards are the Marsh Award for Ornithology, the Marsh Award for International Ornithology, the Marsh Award for Local Ornithology, and the Marsh Award for Innovative Ornithology. https://bto.org/community/grants-and-funding/marsh-awards.

The BOU Awards are awarded by the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) to support ornithological research and communication in various ways. Some of the awards are the BOU Career Development Bursary, the BOU Small Research Grants, the BOU Conference Bursaries, and the BOU Science Communication Award. https://www.bou.org.uk/grants-and-bursaries/.

The DO-G Awards are awarded by the German Ornithologists' Society (DO-G) to honor outstanding achievements in ornithology. Some of the awards are the Erwin Stresemann Prize, the Wolfgang Makatsch Medal, and the DO-G Poster Prize. https://www.do-g.de/en/awards/.

The **NOF Awards** are awarded by the Nordic Society Oikos (NOF) to acknowledge excellence in ornithological research and communication in Scandinavia. Some of the awards are the NOF Honorary Membership, the NOF Best Paper Award, and the NOF Best Student Presentation Award. https://www.nordic-society-oikos.org/awards.

AUSTRALIA

The **D. L. Serventy Medal** is awarded by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (BirdLife Australia) to a person who has rendered outstanding service to ornithology in the Australasian region. https://www.birdlife.org.au/who-we-are/our-organisation/awards-scholarships/d-l-serventy-medal

The **John Hobbs Medal** is awarded by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (BirdLife Australia) to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to ornithological research in the Australasian region. https://www.birdlife.org.au/who-we-are/our-organisation/awards-scholarships/john-hobbs-medal

The **W. Roy Wheeler Medallion** is awarded by Bird Observation and Conservation Australia (BOCA) to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to ornithology in Australia. https://www.birdlife.org.au/who-we-are/our-organisation/awards-scholarships/w-roy-wheeler-medallion

The **S.G. 'Bill' Lane Award** is awarded by Charles Sturt University (CSU) to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to ornithology in Australia or internationally. https://about.csu.edu.au/community/graham-centre/news-events/news/news-archive/2019-news/s-g-bill-lane-award-for-excellence-in-ornithology

The **Robert Falla Memorial Award** is awarded by the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (OSNZ) to recognize individuals or groups who have made outstanding contributions towards ornithology and conservation in New Zealand or the South Pacific region. https://www.osnz.org.nz/robert-falla-memorial-award

AFRICA

The **ABC Conservation Awards** are awarded by the African Bird Club (ABC) to support small and medium-sized conservation projects in Africa. https://www.africanbirdclub.org/projects/conservation-fund.

The **ABC Expedition Award** is awarded by the African Bird Club (ABC) to support expeditions that contribute significantly to knowledge of African birds. https://www.africanbirdclub.org/projects/expedition-fund.

ASIA

The **Salim Ali National Award** for Nature Conservation is awarded by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) to an individual who has made significant contributions to nature conservation in India. The award is named after Salim Ali, a renowned Indian ornithologist and naturalist. https://bnhs.org/awards/salim-ali-national-award-for-nature-conservation/

The **Salim Ali Award for Ornithology** is awarded by the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to ornithology in India. The award is also named after Salim Ali and consists of a medal and a citation. https://www.insaindia.res.in/awards.php?award_id=18

The **Yamashina Yoshimaro Award** is awarded by the Yamashina Institute for Ornithology (YIO) to an individual who has made remarkable achievements in ornithology or related fields in Japan or abroad. The award is named after Yamashina Yoshimaro, a Japanese ornithologist and founder of YIO. https://www.yamashina.or.jp/english/award.html

The **Bird Conservation Nepal Award** is awarded by Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) to an individual or organization who has made significant contributions to bird conservation in Nepal. The award consists of a certificate and a cash prize. https://www.birdlifenepal.org/page/awards

The **Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society Award** is awarded by the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society (SLWCS) to an individual or organization who has made outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation in Sri Lanka. The award consists of a plaque and a citation. https://www.slwcs.org/awards

INTERNSHIPS

Bartels Science Illustration Internship: This internship is offered by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and involves creating illustrations of birds and other wildlife for scientific publications, exhibits, and education. The internship is open to Cornell undergraduates who would conduct the proposed project during the summer in collaboration with a Cornell Lab of Ornithology faculty or staff member. The internship duration and stipend are negotiable.
https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/jobs/

Ornithology Internship: This internship is offered by the Georgia Museum of Natural History and involves working in the Ornithology Collection. The internship is open to students who are enrolled in BIOL, ECOL, or FNAR 4261 (Museum of Natural History Internship) at the University of Georgia. The internship duration and credits are negotiable. https://gmnh.franklin.uga.edu/internship-information

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology Volunteering opportunities: Seeking volunteers to help in various positions to transform into a more effective advocate for bird conservation. https://wsobirds.org/volunteer

For more information, visit

https://ornithologyexchange.org/funding/portal/

NOMINATE A NEW MEMBER

EXPAND THE AVIAN COMMUNITY

https://intorn.wildapricot.org/

REACH OUT

We invite articles, book reviews, suggestions, and feedback for publication in the upcoming edition of **The IOU Flutter**.
Contact:

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