



Bold actions for birds
across the Americas.

September 9, 2025

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

American Bird Conservancy (ABC), an organization working in California and throughout the Americas to conserve birds and their habitats, thanks you for your leadership in conserving migratory birds and recovering endangered bird species.

We appreciate California's strong actions to defend migratory birds as federal protections wane. The California Migratory Bird Protection Act would be permanently extended by AB 454 and we hope that, if it passes, you will sign this bill into law to ensure that migratory bird protections will remain firmly in place.

Opportunities for Partnership

There are many additional individual opportunities that we would like to highlight as potential partnerships with California State Agencies in order to better protect wild birds and their habitat. These include:

Reducing Bird Mortality Caused By Anthropogenic Hazards

- Reducing Window Collisions: ABC has spearheaded the enactment of laws across the country that require new construction and rehabs to use bird-friendly glass – i.e., glass that has been treated to become visible to birds. Over 1 billion birds are killed in building collisions every year in the US. California laws requiring bird-friendly glass would significantly reduce that number.
- Reducing Tower Collisions: The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has urged operators of towers over 350 feet to turn off steady burning lights that attract birds and cause mass mortality events. California could assist in this effort by encouraging the tower operators in the State to update their lighting systems, saving birds – and energy costs – in the process.
- Reducing Power Line and Wind Turbine Collisions: To reduce threats to declining birds of prey, ABC recommends that the State revise and make mandatory its 2007 Guidelines for Reducing Impacts to Birds and Bats from Wind Energy Development. Additionally, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act provides for an incidental take permit for power line operators and for wind energy operators that requires use of available best practices to reduce eagle mortality. As part of its power line and wind energy permitting decisions, California can require operators to apply for a permit and use the available guidelines.

- Reducing Entrapment in Open Pipes: Mine markers, fence posts, and other open posts can entrap thousands of birds each year. California agencies can be directed and funded to remove, cover, or plug these markers and posts and provide guidance to prohibit their use in the future.

Supporting State and Federally-listed Species Conservation and Recovery

- Recovery of the Marbled Murrelet: the Marbled Murrelet—a federally and state-listed seabird at high extinction risk in California due to habitat loss, wildfire, food variability from climate change, and predator pressures—can be supported through expanded state investment to offset federal funding gaps. This includes bolstering campground cleanup to reduce corvid predation, enhancing coordinated monitoring efforts, advancing old-growth forest protection and restoration, and funding research to foster reoccupation of extirpated forest fragments among other actions.
- Recovery of the Least Bell's Vireo and Riparian-dependent California Bird Species of Special Concern (as described on the [CDFW website](#)): California's riparian birds are imperiled by loss and degradation of native riparian vegetation communities. State support for the implementation of recovery actions such as those outlined in the California State Wildlife Action Plan, and State support for bond initiatives such as Proposition 4 that fund riparian restoration and ensure the sustainability of surface and groundwater-dependent riparian habitats and economies are key to vireo recovery and viability of our riparian songbird communities.
- Recovery of the Western Snowy Plover: Plovers continue to struggle with population declines, but targeted state investment in expanded staff capacity for California State Parks and coastal land stewards, with a focus on visitor education, regulation enforcement, community engagement, consistent monitoring, and predator control (e.g., corvids) would greatly enhance its recovery. Collaborative partnerships with groups such as the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Collaborative, BLM's Coastal National Monument (e.g., Seabird Protection Network), and the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures offer opportunities that bolster CA State Parks' ability to manage coastal environments.

Reducing Known Threats to Birds and Expanding Capacity

- Incentives for Non-Toxic Ammunition and Fishing Tackle: The leading cause of mortality for the California condor is lead poisoning. Reducing risk to this iconic bird requires State engagement, enhanced resources, and public education to shift public behaviors; species' expansion across its historic range can be achieved by strengthening the collaborative federal–state–tribal conservation model.
- Reducing or Banning the Use of Neonicotinoid Coatings on Crop Seeds Across the State: Neonicotinoids (neonics) are systemic pesticides that can be absorbed throughout plants, released to air, diffuse into soil and water, are frequently

detected in water; they can contaminate crops, animal products, insects, birds and humans. Limiting their uses will reduce risks to humans, birds and pollinators and protect the health of state waters and soil.

- Expanding Research and Public Education on the Widespread Impacts of Anticoagulant Rodenticides: Anticoagulant rodenticides (ARs) not only poison birds of prey, but also affect scavenging mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. Strengthened state leadership, building on laws like California's Poison-Free Wildlife Act (AB 2552), can catalyze broader adoption of AR alternatives, reduce ecological contamination, and protect wildlife and hunting resources statewide.
- Supporting Collaborative Capacity: State support for strengthening public-private-tribal collaborative capacity is essential to help CNRA deliver on its administration priorities—particularly as many watershed collaboratives, conservation networks, and joint ventures have lost federal resources. While Proposition 4 promises substantial funding for habitat restoration, conservation, and climate resilience, the critical challenge remains the decline of trusted collaborative capacity on the ground, which is fundamental to implementing multi-benefit, cross-jurisdictional, and cross-agency projects at scale. California's state agencies are exemplars of effective statewide conservation efforts. In particular, California's Department of Fish and Wildlife and its Department of Pesticide Regulation both do a terrific job of balancing the needs of wildlife and ecosystem health with sensible programs for California residents.

Our Work in California

We would also like to highlight ABC's ongoing work in California including:

- Sponsorship of the California Central Coast Joint Venture (C3JV), a multi-agency partnership delivering conservation through locally-driven approaches aimed at achieving California's 30x30 conservation goals and other administration priorities (www.c3jv.org).
- Coordination of recovery efforts for federally and state endangered Least Bell's Vireo leading collaboration and implementation of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Department of Defense, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife actions for the vireo and other listed riparian species.
- Coordination of the California Riparian Birds Working Group.
- Lead on California Wildlife Conservation Board-funded riparian and wetland restoration planning at the Amargosa River, in the Mojave Desert. Team members include UC Davis, River Partners, and the Amargosa Conservancy.
- Monitoring and recovery of the state and federally listed Marbled Murrelet.
- Partnering with the Department of Pesticide Regulation to study the impact of pesticide seed coatings.



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- Working with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to amend rules on the use of chemicals on state lands.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering these bird conservation and habitat protection recommendations. We would like to explore opportunities for collaborating more closely with you and the California Natural Resource Agency and its many departments as our conservation capacity in California continues to grow.

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments, or if there are other resources that we can provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Hardy Kern III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small "III" at the end.

Edward Hardy Kern III
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