



ANNUAL REVIEW 2018





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We would like to express our deep appreciation for the generous support of our Honorary President, HH Princess Takamado of Japan, whose commitment and personal interest in birds and conservation contributes enormously to BirdLife's progress and achievements.

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A message from the Chair



What is destined to be an exciting and eventful five years as chairman of the world's largest conservation partnership began for me in the unlikeliest of places: the still and tranquility of Wallonia, Belgium's Golden Lakes Village.

For one week in September 2018, this peaceful resort played host to a deliberately pared-down Global Partnership Meeting, the site chosen to free its participants from bombast and distractions. There was simply too much at stake. For here, over 200 representatives from 107 BirdLife Partners congregated to formulate a conservation battle plan for the next half a decade; a period that could decide not just the future for the world's threatened bird species, but also our own.

I left Wallonia honoured by the support I received from the BirdLife Partners, and invigorated by their energy and passion as we prepare to enter a pivotal point of our planet's history. Our unique sense of collaboration and ability to demonstrate impact at both global and local levels is what sets us apart, and I look forward to helping the BirdLife Partners continue to grow in voice and stature, as we combine our might to put pressure on the world's governments to agree a new deal for nature that will protect the natural world we rely on for our sustenance and sanity. After the calm of Wallonia, we are ready to roll up our sleeves and make a difference as only BirdLife International can.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias

Chair, BirdLife Global Council



Partnership for
nature and people

BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation partnership. Together we are 115 BirdLife Partners worldwide – one per country – and growing, with almost 11 million supporters, 7,000 local conservation groups and 7,400 staff.

Find out more at: www.birdlife.org

How we work

A

As arguably the most mobile lifeforms on Earth, birds know no borders. Thus, if we're to protect them, conservation also needs to know no borders.

That's why BirdLife International was formed in 1922 (as the International Council for the Protection of Birds) - conservationists in the UK, Netherlands, France and US realised the need for transnational co-operation to effectively combat the threats facing the world's birds. The result: a truly global partnership of environmental NGOs.

Today, the threats birds face have only grown – but so has BirdLife. Today, we are a partnership of over 100 national conservation organisations, all of whom share a common vision – to mobilise lasting, sustainable protection for the world's birds, their habitats, and global biodiversity in general.

Together, we believe in a holistic approach to conservation – using the insight we gain from our rigorous studies on the health of the world's bird species, to work for a world where nature and people live in harmony. Here's how we do it...



1

WE ARE TRULY GLOBAL.

Colombia's Calidris became the newest BirdLife Partner in late 2017, bringing the total at the end of 2018 to 115 representing 113 countries or territories. Our Partners are as diverse as the birds we protect – some, such as the UK's RSPB, are household names with over a million members, while others employ less than a handful of staff. Big or small, young or old, the Partnership empowers BirdLife Partners to connect with each other and extend their own local conservation efforts beyond their own national boundaries – what we call our 'local-to-global' approach.



2

WE KEEP OUR EYE ON ALL THE WORLD'S BIRDS – RARE AND COMMON.

Passenger Pigeon. Eskimo Curlew. Just two examples of bird species that were once a common sight in our skies – until they weren't. As part of our commitment to preventing extinctions, we keep an eye on all the world's bird species – including the well-known ones. By spotting downwards trends in species like Amur Falcon, Canada Warbler and Snowy Owl early, we can act quickly to address the underlying reasons and ensure common birds stay common.

SEE PAGE 42



3

WE'VE DOCUMENTED THE BIGGEST NETWORK OF KEY CONSERVATION AREAS GOING.

Forests, wetlands, deserts, mountains, even the middle of the ocean – birds are capable of specialising to adapt to almost any environment. Which means it's a massive challenge to ensure the world's birds are safe across their range. To sharpen both local and global conservation priorities, our Important Birds & Biodiversity Area network charts the habitats we need to fight the hardest to protect.

SEE PAGE 14



4

WE WORK IN A PRACTICAL AND COST-EFFECTIVE WAY FOR SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS.

What is the value in pouring time and resources into a project, if it won't leave a lasting footprint? Whether it's replanting forests, engaging hunters or influencing global policy, the Partnerships strives to ensure that ecological and practical sustainability is built into everything we do. As part of this, we demonstrate and advocate nature's values at every turn.

SEE PAGE 34



5

WE DELIVER POSITIVE CHANGE FOR PEOPLE.

Conservation cannot work effectively if it is delivered without consideration or involvement from the local communities who share the same resources as the species we work to protect, and are dependent on the same resources for their livelihoods. The Partnership strongly believes that working with local communities, and locally empowering people, are the foundations for long-lasting conservation. Using birds as indicators, our projects work to make a better world for birds, nature, and humans, too.

SEE PAGE 38



2018 was the

year everything came together. Or rather, everyone. Our ground-breaking Flyways Summit, attended by representatives from over 100 organisations from 70 countries (see page 10) was just one of many heart-warming highlights in a year where the

world's mood began to change. Conservationists, scientists, governments, the business sector – stakeholders from all walks of life met under the same roof for the first time to exchange ideas, share experiences, and drive forward meaningful, collaborative plans to ensure the world's migratory birds continue to light up our skies for decades to come.

When the mood changes, so does the conversation. While we can't let governments and big businesses off the hook, increasingly individuals are realising the power they hold in this era of instant communication is vast. In this spirit, BirdLife, in conjunction with National Geographic, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon (BirdLife in the US), declared 2018 the 'Year of the Bird', in a year-long campaign geared towards connecting nature lovers with small but impactful steps they can take to benefit nature – from re-planting native plants, to petitioning their governments to leave their nature laws be.

As a scientific organisation at heart, our part in this process is to ensure the public is armed with solid, reliable information. That's why the latest update of our State of the World's Birds report – our flagship scientific publication, is a sense of great pride to all of us at BirdLife. While the headline stats are cause for alarm, our rigorous, fiercely-independent science also provides tangible, measurable proof that conservation makes a difference (see page 42). It's demonstrable evidence that we can all affect change, both individually and in aggregate. We are facing a time when only solid information paired to proven expertise will help us turn around the fate nature is confronting, and BirdLife is ready for the challenge.

Patricia Zurita

Chief Executive Officer, BirdLife International

T H E Y E A R I N

Preventing Extinctions

As our flagship scientific report, State of the World's Birds [see page 42] highlights, one in eight of the world's 10,000+ extant bird species are now at risk of extinction. Established in 2008, our Preventing Extinctions Programme (PEP) focuses on the subset of these globally threatened species that have been assessed as Critically Endangered - the highest possible threat category and the last bump before extinction. PEP uses the network of individuals and organisations within the Partnership to find those best places to protect these species, and to match up donors with species conservation projects via our innovative Species Champions initiative.



ROGER SAFFORD
Senior Programme
Manager, Preventing
Extinctions

"The Preventing Extinctions Programme continues to live up to its name, always with an emphasis on sustainability, long-term recovery and collaborative action guided by science. 2018 was a year of successful collaborations. We celebrated the completion of a pioneering action planning project for European species, and the launch of a new partnership, Restore Species, with three other international NGOs. We also passed a major milestone in Northern Bald Ibis conservation, following decades of successful action led by BirdLife and Governments."

Northern Bald Ibis © Fireglo/Shutterstock



“The Northern Bald Ibis’ recovery is heart-warming and exciting. Our challenge now is to ensure it lasts and grows.”

KHADJJA BOURASS
Executive Director, GREPOM

Red List: Northern Bald Ibis no longer Critically Endangered

Following decades of sustained conservation effort, in 2018 the Northern Bald Ibis was downlisted from Critically Endangered to Endangered as part of our annual update to the IUCN Red List. This species was once widespread across north Africa, the Middle East and southern Europe. But by 1998 habitat loss, pesticides and hunting had driven the population to an all-time low of

59 pairs, most of them confined to one colony in Souss-Massa National Park, Morocco. BirdLife, working with the Moroccan government and various BirdLife Partners including GREPOM (BirdLife in Morocco), launched a community education campaign and employed local fishermen as wardens to protect the habitat. Numbers have risen to a modern-day record of 147 breeding pairs and spread to two small new breeding sites.

S P E C I E S S P O T L I G H T

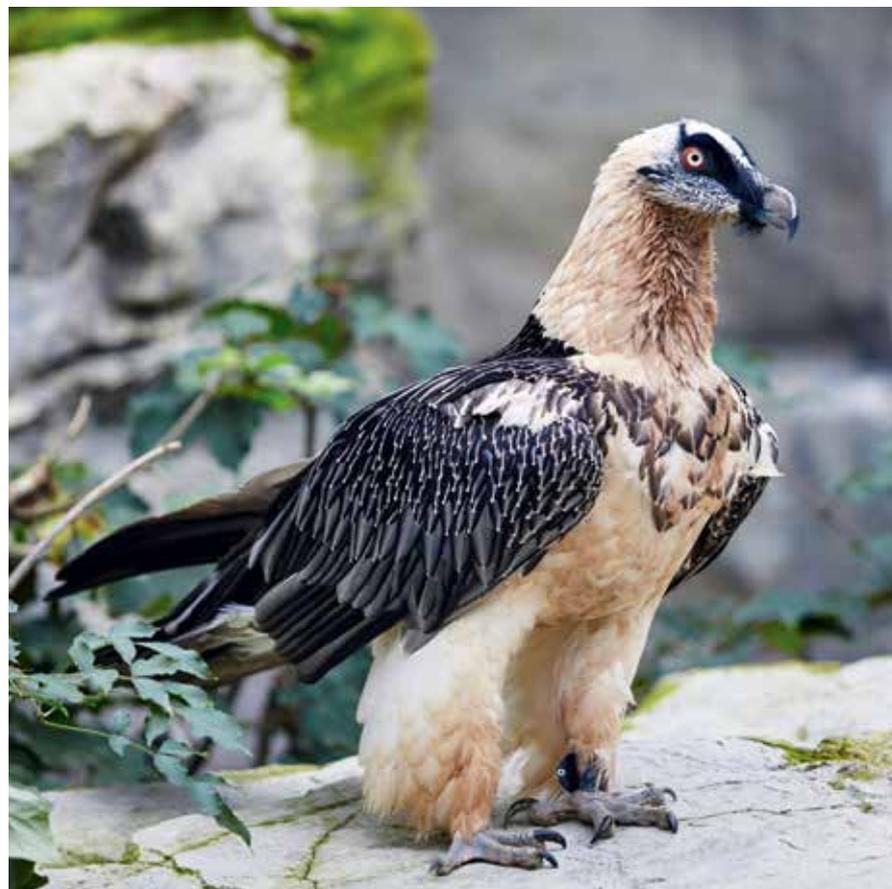
The Northern Bald Ibis was once an integral part of human culture. Over the centuries, it has been idolised as a symbol of fertility and virtue, mummified alongside Ancient Egyptian royalty, and even used as the hieroglyph *akh*, meaning “to be resplendent, to shine.” Although Morocco is its final wild stronghold, semi-wild populations persist in Turkey, and the success seen in Morocco raise hopes for further recovery across at least some of its former range.

Giants of conservation unite in Restore Species partnership

This year we launched Restore Species, a partnership between BirdLife, Fauna & Flora International, TRAFIC and the Wildlife Conservation Society to tackle the most pressing and direct threats to animal species worldwide, with a focus on overlooked 'underdog' species. The partnership focuses on three main priorities: illegal and unsustainable trade, illegal and unsustainable hunting, and poisoning. Funded by Restore Our Planet, Restore Species supports BirdLife projects that are already underway, including tackling the illegal killing of birds in Asia and around the Mediterranean, the Asian bird trade and vulture poisoning.



Chattering Lory © Panu Ruangjan/Shutterstock



Bearded Vulture © Ewa Studio/Shutterstock

A new gold standard for Species Action Plans

This year saw the conclusion of one of BirdLife's most ambitious projects to date: the EU LIFE-funded EuroSAP project. This three-year collaboration involved nine BirdLife Partners, 65 countries, more than 500 individuals, and detailed Species Action Plans (SAPs) for 16 globally threatened bird species. The initiative aimed to tackle severe threats that affect iconic birds across the European continent, uniting countries throughout these key species' ranges. Focal species ranged from the much-loved European Turtle-dove (Vulnerable) to the enigmatic Bearded Vulture (Near Threatened). The project has set a new gold standard for species action plans at an international scale.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Macaw nest boxes in Bolivia



TJALLE BOORSMA
Conservation Program
Director, Asociación
Armonía

In 1992, the Blue-throated Macaw was rediscovered in the Beni Savannas of northern Bolivia, have previously been unknown in the wild to scientists, but highly threatened by demand for the cagebird trade. Now, the main obstacle to the species' recovery is habitat loss and a lack of suitable nesting trees - a situation our Bolivian Partner has been working to address for over 15 years.

WHERE DO YOU OPERATE YOUR NEST BOX PROGRAMME?

Since 2005 we have been placing nest boxes near the town of Loreto in the Marban province. Since then, 81 chicks have successfully fledged. 2018 saw these fledgings return to raise their own chicks for the first time. Now we are focusing our efforts on the population in our Barba Azul Nature Reserve, where the species is present in large numbers.

HOW HAVE THE NEST BOX DESIGNS EVOLVED?

As we had so much success in the south, we thought that we would achieve the same success instantly in Barba Azul. Nope! While birds down south breed in dense forest habitat at approximately four metres in height,

we placed our nestboxes in similar habitat in Barba Azul, to no avail. With the discovery of breeding macaws in the park in 2017, it became apparent that up north they prefer the tallest dead palms in open savanna. So that is where we are now placing our boxes in Barba Azul - with success. More generally, we also learned to decrease the entrance cavity by 10cm to avoid competition with the more common Blue-and-yellow Macaw!

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We are working on a landscape scale alliance between beef producers and conservation institutions. We would like to see a certification system where best practices, ranching, protecting and saving endangered species are rewarded.

T H E Y E A R I N

Flyways

Bird migration is one of the great wonders of the natural world. A huge variety of birds make the journey: the tiny Rufous Hummingbird migrates up and down the North American continent, while the Arctic Tern, BirdLife's emblem, migrates from pole to pole. In fact, roughly one in five bird species migrate. And every year, their journeys get figuratively longer, either because their trusted stopover sites are being destroyed by urbanisation, through irresponsible hunting, or as a result of many other complex threats. Due to their mobility, migratory birds require a co-ordinated, global approach to conservation. The BirdLife Partnership works to protect chains of IBAs across all the major migration routes, strengthen capacity at the most vital stopover sites, and address barriers to migration at a landscape scale.



BAREND VAN GEMERDEN
Global Flyways
Programme
Co-ordinator

"The incredible journeys of migratory birds fascinate people around the World. Despite this, human activities are increasingly putting migratory birds at risk. At present, nearly one-fifth of all migratory birds are threatened or near-threatened. International collaboration is needed to conserve migratory birds as they travel from one country to the next. In 2018, BirdLife Partners along all major flyways worked together to protect key wetland sites, address illegal hunting, reduce the risks of energy infrastructure, and promote nature-inclusive land use."

Saker Falcon © Michael Ninger/Shutterstock

“The Flyway Summit gave us an opportunity to exchange experiences in protecting birds in places where they need it most”

YEHYA KHALED director of RSCN
(BirdLife Jordan)

Global flyways conservation summit in Abu Dhabi

An unprecedented meeting convened by BirdLife and hosted by the International Fund for Houbara Conservation pulled together representatives from over 70 countries and 100 organisations, involving decision-makers from all the world’s major flyways. The summit celebrated the importance of migratory birds to society and highlighted their vulnerability as they travel across borders that offer diverse threats and inconsistent degrees of protection. Top priorities for flyway conservation were

identified and discussed, such as tackling the illegal killing of birds and the threat posed by renewable energy infrastructure. Additionally, specific sessions were held on improving protection of particularly vulnerable bird families and species, including bustards, African-Eurasian vultures and Saker Falcons. Several tangible actions were proposed, including the creation of a Global Coasts Forum to unite stakeholders in protecting coastal ecosystems, and the designation of Vulture Safe Zones in South Asia.

I N N U M B E R S

ACTIONS PROPOSED BY THE SAKER FALCON GLOBAL ACTION PLAN AT THE GLOBAL SUMMIT:

10

falcon hospitals to be engaged within a Saker Falcon network

100

satellite tags to be deployed

1,000

artificial nest platforms to be built

1,000,000

electricity poles to be made bird-safe

Bird-friendly beef hits the hotels

The scope of the Grasslands Alliance continues to expand with its influence now not only transnational (encompassing 500 Alliance Farms across the Americas) but also transatlantic. Following the debut of Uruguayan Alliance certified beef in the Netherlands, the bird-friendly meat was showcased at the Hilton Hotels Food and Beverage Conference in Barcelona and is now distributed across the continent to hotels and restaurants by the Netherlands based company, Nice to Meat. European consumers are now able to enjoy the premium quality and unique flavour of the beef that comes only with the organic and sustainable rearing of cattle on South America's fertile pampas.



Pampas landscape, Argentina © Aves Argentinas



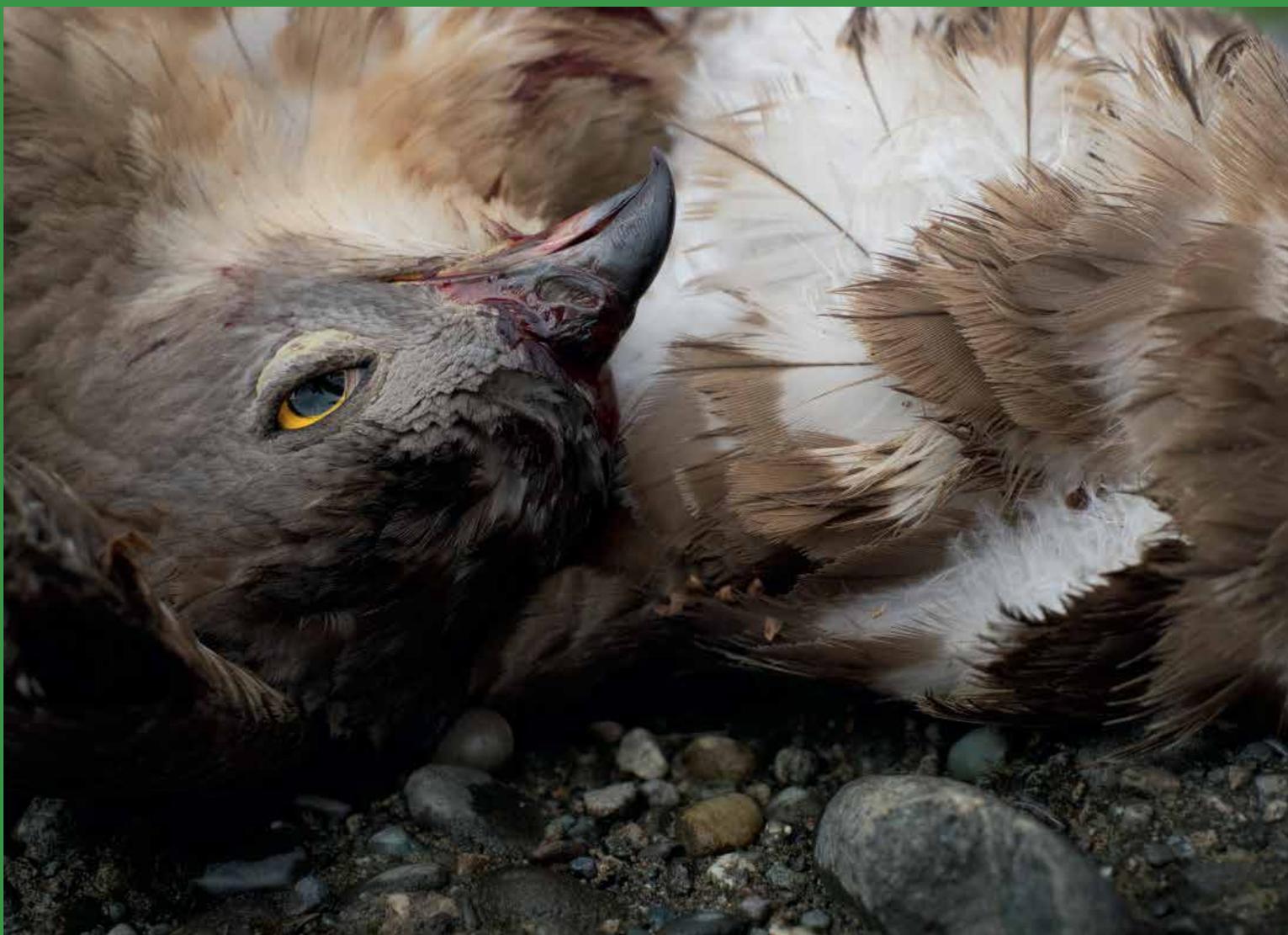
Spoon-billed Sandpipers © Shutterstock

“Super Spoonie” reveals new staging sites

A satellite-tagging study highlighted the importance of increased understanding of migratory routes. An individual Spoon-billed Sandpiper, fondly referred to as “Lime 07 the Super Spoonie”, undertook a phenomenal 9,000km migration revealing previously

unknown staging sites and, following a non-stop 2,300km stretch lasting 49 hours, provided the first ever record of this species in Indonesia. Also in Asia, there was further good progress in China for the World Heritage nomination of the Yellow Sea, and new policies for the protection of coastal wetlands.

Finally, building on our review of the scope and scale of the illegal killing of migratory birds across the African-Eurasian Flyway, a similar review in South-East Asia is underway, backed up by the establishment of an East Asian-Australasian Flyway / Convention of Migratory Species IKB Taskforce.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Combating poaching in Italy



UMBERTO GALLO-ORSI
Illegal Killing of Birds
Policy Advisor, LIPU

The Messina Strait, a narrow waterway between Sicily and mainland Italy, is a major migration 'bottleneck' and former illegal poaching hotspot. Volunteer-ran 'anti-poaching camps' are beginning to turn things around.

WHEN DID THE ANTI-POACHING CAMPS BEGIN, AND WHY?

The camps started in 1984 to support the State Forestry Corps' illegal bird killing unit. At the time, we estimated over 5000 birds (mainly raptors) were illegally shot every spring, despite being legally protected since 1979.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE?

Shooting migrating raptors was a long-standing tradition, sometimes even accompanied by family picnics, and each family had its own 'shooting grounds'. Therefore, opposition was ferocious: a volunteer's car was set on fire and the local office was blasted with a bomb. Volunteers reporting illegal activity were verbally and often physically abused, and police cars and a helicopter were shot at.

HOW DID THINGS IMPROVE IN 2018?

Slowly, the situation changed. Volunteers - lead by a few local brave conservationists - coming from all over Europe were eventually joined by a growing number of local people. Prosecutions increased, creating a deterrent to other poachers. Nowadays we estimate 'only' 100-200 birds are killed yearly, and local communities are now starting to see migration as a potential tourism opportunity. Furthermore, decades of migration research support our anti-poaching activities by allowing us to predict the arrival of large flocks.

T H E Y E A R I N

IBAs

In operation since the late 1970s, our Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) concept is the backbone of our work, informing every area of our work and bringing focus to priority habitats at both a local and a global level. Using a simple yet robust set of criteria, we have identified and documented thousands of sites across land and sea, all of which are vital for the persistence of biodiversity on our planet. This information allows us to spend limited funding and resources on conserving a relatively modest number of sites – a cost-efficient way of securing a future for a large number of species. The criteria underpinning IBAs is now being extended to all taxa, in the form of a new gold standard for site-based conservation: Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).



ZOLTAN WALICZKY

Global IBA Programme coordinator

"There are more than 13,000 Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) identified to date. Unfortunately, IBAs are under increasing pressure from unsustainable development and land use changes including infrastructure, mining and agriculture, which imperil their bird populations. Every year, BirdLife compiles a list of the most threatened sites, "IBAs in Danger", which are published on our website. 2018 saw some notable victories for IBAs in Danger. However, major policy changes are urgently needed to safeguard IBAs at all levels."

Flying Fish Cove © Christmas Island Tourism Association

“BirdLife Australia was elated when the Australian Government listened to over 56,000 voices and prioritised the unique biodiversity of Christmas Island.”

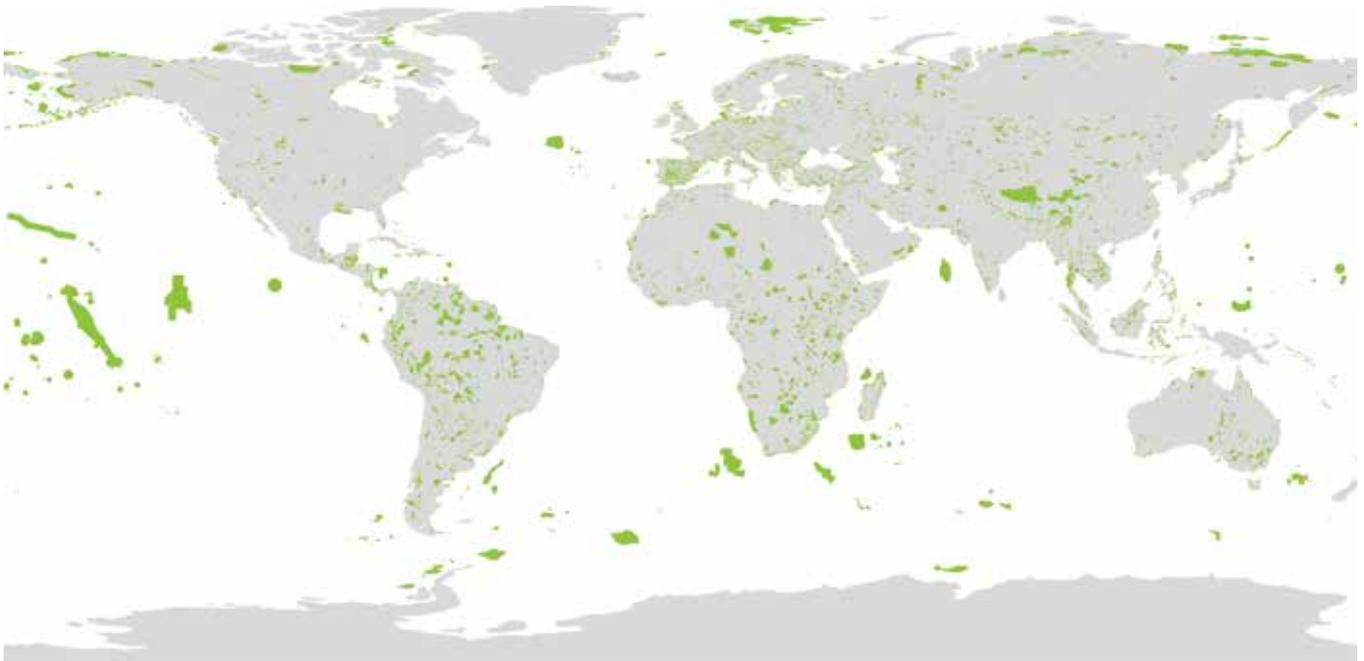
ANDREW HUNTER Conservation Campaigner,
BirdLife Australia

Major victories for Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) in danger

In April, we updated our IBAs in Danger Story Map, which now provides in-depth information on all 240+ sites currently at risk. In 2018 we celebrated major victories for four of these IBAs in Danger. Following tireless protesting from **BirdLife Australia**,

the Australian government rejected an application for phosphate mining on Christmas Island. Elsewhere, after over a decade of legal campaigning from **OTOP (BirdLife in Poland)**, the European Court of Justice ruled that logging in Białowieża Forest, Europe’s oldest forest, is illegal. The Government

of Tanzania abandoned plans to construct a soda ash factory at Lake Natron, the world’s most significant breeding site for Lesser Flamingos. Finally, Gediz Delta was saved from a mega-bridge construction thanks to a successful court case lead by **Doğa (BirdLife in Turkey)**.

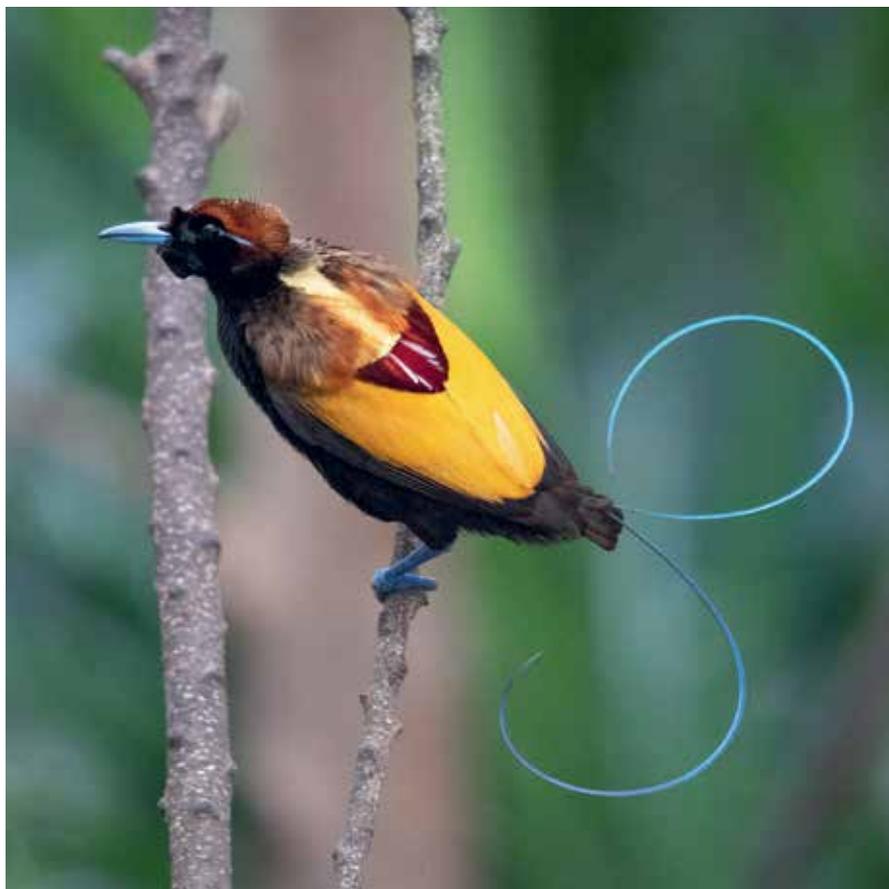


Global profile of IBAs continues to rise

IBAs are increasingly being used as a global standard for measuring and protecting biodiversity. This year, they formed integral parts of several major policy documents including the United

Nations' Sustainable Development Goals report, the Ramsar Global Wetlands Outlook report, and the International Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assessment. The assessment made headlines with the

finding that one million species are at risk, and that countries are not on track to meet their biodiversity targets. IBAs were listed as a major solution to ensure countries focus their action on the most important sites for nature.



Magnificent Bird-of-paradise © Ru Smith/Shutterstock

First ever list of candidate IBAs for West Papua

The island of New Guinea is the last significant gap in our global IBA network. It supports a rich and highly unique diversity of birds, and is especially famed for its birds of paradise: 38 of the world's 41 species are found there. Throughout 2018 the Secretariat helped **Burung Indonesia (BirdLife Partner)** to initiate the the first inventory of IBAs and KBAs in West Papua and Papua provinces. Key first steps included a list of bird 'trigger species' used to identify IBAs, and a shortlist of 41 candidate IBAs for West Papua. Field survey training was held in Tambrau District to collect further data on the region.



Photo © Gustavo Bruno

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Argentina's shorebird haven



ANDREA FILADORO
Mar Chiquita Project,
Aves Argentinas

In 2018, proceeds from the British Birdwatching Fair went towards facilitating the creation of Argentina's largest National Park: Mar Chiquita (meaning 'little sea'), a vast salt lake and shorebird haven of global importance.

HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU HEARD THE NEWS?

Finding out that Mar Chiquita was the flagship project at Birdfair 2018 was incredible. Through Birdfair, we were able to raise awareness to a new, international audience and generate even more opportunities for support.

WHAT MAKES MAR CHIQUITA SPECIAL?

Mar Chiquita stands out for its immense size and high biodiversity, including 380 bird species. It behaves like an inland sea in that every year, hundreds of thousands of migratory shorebirds congregate here, travelling from both the Northern Hemisphere and Patagonia.

HOW IS THE SITE THREATENED?

Unregulated water extraction from nearby rivers, especially for irrigation, threatens to shrink or dry out the lagoon completely. Agricultural encroachment and pollution are also pressing concerns. Current regulations are insufficient, but we hope that National Park status will give us more power to create change.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST STEPS TO PROTECT THIS PRECIOUS SITE?

We have started by talking to community leaders and local people to promote the idea of the National Park and the importance of its wildlife. We are listening to their ideas and offering training in ecotourism, which will create sustainable alternative incomes.

T H E Y E A R I N

Climate Change

There is no longer room for debate: climate change is real, it's happening, it's largely caused by human activity, and it is a serious threat to life on Earth, including people. The devastating effects of climate change implicate and compound every area of our work, from invasive species, to habitat fragmentation, to the distribution of the species we strive to protect. The BirdLife Partnership is tackling this pervasive threat in numerous ways, including the advocacy for effective climate change policies at national, regional and international levels. These efforts are underpinned by our ground-breaking research, both on the impacts of climate change and in the field of renewable energy deployment, which help inform our work on the ground.



ASHTON BERRY
Global Climate Change
Coordinator, BirdLife
International

"Now, more than ever, climate change is proving to be one of the most pressing concerns of our time. Our Climate Change Programme focuses nature-based solutions. Natural habitats such as wetlands and forests are essential assets in storing carbon, holding back flooding or preventing soil erosion. We also help ecosystems and communities to become more resilient to climate change, and support nature-friendly renewable energy. In this new and changing field, we are constantly challenging our thinking and exploring new ideas."

Lake Kivu, Rwanda © Tetyana Dotsenko

“CRAGs combines science with local knowledge. Our approach pinpoints ‘erosion hotspots’, allowing us to restore the land at these specific sites”

PROVIDENCE AKAYEZU CRAGS Project Manager, BirdLife

Novel techniques protect people and planet

Since climate change poses humanitarian as well as ecological problems, the best protective measures will account for both people and wildlife. Predicted rises in rainfall render hilly and mountainous regions vulnerable to landslides, soil erosion and flooding. Moreover, they often host globally important biodiversity because of their huge variety in habitat. For

these reasons, BirdLife is taking a lead on the CRAGs project. CRAG stands for Climate Resilient Altitudinal Gradient - an approach that adopts ‘nature-based solutions’, putting communities at the heart of the conservation effort whilst recognising that functioning ecosystems are fundamental to environmental health. The CRAG concept is being piloted in areas of Rwanda and Burundi where river sedimentation is severe.

Resolving this will benefit local people in numerous ways such as improved agricultural irrigation, healthy fisheries and freshwater for domestic use. In 2018, scientists successfully completed vulnerability assessments and ‘sediment fingerprinting’ to find the sources of erosion. With the knowledge in place, African governments and organisations are increasingly supportive in enabling communities to implement solutions.

Enabling birds and blades to share the skies

Wind power holds much promise as an environmentally-friendly energy source but turbines present a fatal collision risk to birds and bats which must be minimised. To this end, BirdLife coordinates the Energy Task Force: a platform working with governments and businesses to identify sites that are both cost-effective and bird-safe for renewable energy infrastructure. The work of the Task Force is informed by our science. This year BirdLife mapped where birds are most likely to conflict with potential wind farms, showing that areas most likely to cause conflict are largely unprotected. As the Energy Task Force expands with a view to influencing policy worldwide, this is a problem we are well placed to solve.



Via PixHere



Wood harvesting in Germany / Andreas Beer

'Clean' bioenergy paradox exposed in new animation

Myth busting time: renewable does not necessarily equate to sustainable. BirdLife's Europe and Central Asia (ECA) division has long endeavoured to dispel the myth that bioenergy, which makes up 65% of the European Union's renewable energy mix, is 'clean energy'.

In 2018, the ECA team created an animation that comprehensively explains how, contrary to popular belief, the burning of biomass for energy is not carbon neutral. The animation is in English with subtitles available in various languages. It explores how government subsidies and incentives

have encouraged industries to jump on the bioenergy bandwagon, with alarmingly unsustainable consequences, including clear-cutting of old-growth forest and land grabs. Awareness is essential in ending the facade that by opting for bioenergy we are doing our bit for the climate.



Canada Warbler © Paul Reeves Photography

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

12 Partners, one Action Plan



MATTHEW JEFFERY
Deputy Director,
International Alliances
Program, National
Audubon Society

The Climate Action Plan for the Americas was developed by BirdLife International and 12 BirdLife Partners across the region, with the aim of delivering nature-based solutions that increase the climate resilience of people and biodiversity throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Our US Partner, the National Audubon Society, has provided leadership both in the development and the subsequent advancement of this plan.

WHAT IS THE ROLE AUDUBON HAS PLAYED SINCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN?

Audubon has been working at a country level with specific Partners and potential donors to identify resources that advance the plan. In Colombia, we have been working with Calidris (BirdLife Partner) to build resilience with communities through alternative livelihoods. In Chile, we're working with CODEFF (BirdLife Partner) and the Ministry of Environment on coastal resilience through new protections and restoration.

HOW HAS THE FOCUS SHIFTED IN RECENT YEARS?

Despite resistance from the Trump Administration in addressing climate change, there is still a groundswell of

grassroots support, especially from younger citizens. With the help of proven science that shows what we stand to lose if we fail to act, more people are being galvanized to do all we can to protect our world.

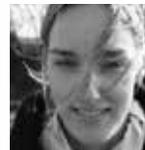
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

In the Americas, there is a great need to build the political "bird conservation voice" to advance adaptation and mitigation measures that improve bird habitat that will allow for population centers to shift under a changing climate and to better support people. A key consideration under this is to build economic value in birds, and nature. The green economy needs to grow so that conservation actions meet government priorities – jobs and economy.

T H E Y E A R I N

Marine

Seabirds are one of the world's most threatened groups of vertebrates. Today, almost half of these incredible species have declining populations, and one in three species is globally threatened with extinction. Steep declines have been identified almost everywhere, from albatrosses in the Southern Ocean to puffins in the North Atlantic. Even once-abundant species, including some penguins, are now threatened with extinction. The reason? A complex web of threats, including, but not limited to, Invasive species, overfishing, climate change and unintentional conflicts with fishing vessels. In response, we established our Marine Programme in 1997. Working with BirdLife Partners around the world (and in the high seas), we advocate for seabirds and their habitats, and work alongside fisheries to develop innovative solutions.



CLEO SMALL
Head of Marine Programme

"In 2018 the Marine Programme continued its efforts to reduce the global bycatch of seabirds in fisheries, including through the Albatross Task Force in 5 countries, and our work with global tuna fleets. In the Mediterranean and West Africa, the Mava-funded marine projects got up to full speed, including fisheries observer training in ten countries and >1,000 seabird tracking devices deployed. In terms of protecting globally important seabirds sites, we supported identification of sites in the North Atlantic, West Indian Ocean and Antarctica."



Mizphoto.cz/Shutterstock



“ Our threat assessment underlines the potential to take positive action for seabirds ”

MARIA DIAS,
Senior Marine Science Officer

New research pivotal to marine conservation

This year saw the first ever comprehensive assessment of threats to all seabird species, in order to identify the main drivers of declines. We now know that invasive species, bycatch and climate change are the top three threats, and this important study will underpin the Marine Programme’s work to save these iconic birds for years to come. Worryingly, the study indicates that many species that are not currently

threatened are facing the same dangers as those that are, so if we don’t act now, many more species could soon be at risk of extinction. The problem is big, but there is cause for hope: although addressing climate change is a complicated and long-term endeavour, the issues of bycatch and invasive species have proven solutions. By addressing these major threats we are giving seabird species greater resilience to face the pervasive threat of climate change.

S P E C I E S S P O T L I G H T

Seven years pass before a Grey-headed Albatross fledgling returns to its natal ground to breed. The pressing mystery has been ‘where do they go in the meantime?’ - especially because juvenile survival rates are low. A project with the British Antarctic Survey means we can now follow the movements of satellite-tagged juveniles online. Preliminary results indicate areas of high risk of bycatch in the South East Atlantic – crucial information for the world’s fastest-declining albatross.



Assessment finds seafood certification scheme needs to do more to tackle bycatch



We assessed how effectively the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) sustainable seafood certification scheme addressed bycatch of non-target species using a red/amber/green 'traffic light'

scoring system. Shockingly, only three of the 23 certified fisheries assessed achieved an overall green score (demonstrating effective action to reduce bycatch), unveiling huge room for improvement in the scheme.

Recommended improvements were given to the MSC, including much stronger data standards on bycatch and the need to ensure that best practice measures to reduce bycatch are implemented in certified fisheries.



Further breakthroughs in the protection of albatrosses



The success of the Albatross Task Force continues, with further reductions in bycatch: the Namibian demersal longline fishery, which used to kill roughly 20,000 birds annually, has seen its seabird bycatch drop by over

90%. In Argentina, introduced new regulations require all trawling vessels to use bird-scaring lines. We also conducted port-based outreach to Asian vessels in Fiji, Mauritius and Cape Town, and undertook a pioneering analysis with Global Fishing Watch

data to estimate compliance by these fleets with requirements to set their lines at night. The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission adopted a strengthened seabird measure, with efforts led by New Zealand.



I N
F O C U S

Towards the end of the year, we launched #AlbatrossStories. This digital media campaign – which follows the lives of individual albatrosses on Bird Island, South Georgia – has helped to increase public awareness and concern for albatrosses.

T H E Y E A R I N

Invasive Species

Even on the world's remotest islands, human impact can be felt. Introduced to new lands either deliberately, or as stowaways on ships, invasive species from rugged, competitive ecosystems can quickly take hold in their new surroundings, making short work of endemic species who have evolved in a world without land predators and find themselves defenceless. Introduced species are the primary driver of documented bird extinctions since 1500 – but we're working to reverse the tide, with 30 islands already cleared, resulting in rebounding bird populations and stronger crop yields for locals.



STEVE CRANWELL
Invasive Species Programme Manager

"The impact of invasive species is more apparent today than ever before. Almost half of all seabird species are affected, and these dangers intersect with other threats such as bycatch out at sea. Seabirds are not the only ones implicated: 75% of all threatened birds on islands are equally impacted. Despite these daunting statistics, technological advances are allowing restoration over increasingly large and complex areas. I am extremely proud of the practical solutions the BirdLife Partnership has continued to deliver this year."

Tristan Albatrosses, Gough Island. © RSPB

“Atop this list are 107 islands where it’s feasible to eradicate invasive species right now, with huge potential benefits for threatened species”

IAN BURFIELD Global Science Coordinator (Species),
BirdLife International



The 169 islands we must save now

In 2018, BirdLife co-led a major paper pinpointing priority islands where invasive species removal could have the biggest impact. This huge global collaboration, involving over 50 authors, assessed all threatened terrestrial vertebrates on islands, and

measured how imperilled they are by invasive mammals. Considering technical and social feasibility, they identified 169 priority islands where eradication could begin by 2020 or 2030, preventing the extinctions of up to 131 species. BirdLife’s work is already underway on several: on Gough

Island in the South Atlantic, the [RSPB \(BirdLife in the UK\)](#) is leading plans to remove a strain of invasive house mice to benefit six highly threatened bird species in one go. On Marion Island, [BirdLife South Africa](#) is raising funds to eradicate invasive mice through a “sponsor a hectare” campaign.

Ground-breaking reintroduction of Critically Endangered lark

For centuries following human colonisation of Cabo Verde, the Raso Lark (Critically Endangered) was confined to the tiny, uninhabited Raso Islet, where it was vulnerable to climate change and extreme weather events. With the help of the RSPB, the nearby, much larger island of Santa Luzia was cleared of invasive cats and rats. Then in 2018, team of biologists including SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) translocated 30 radio-tagged Raso Larks to the island, where they have already begun to breed. Thanks to island restoration, one of the world's rarest birds now has the chance to expand into a population that is more robust to change.



Raso Lark © Awatef Abiadh

Exciting proof of bird recovery on restored Pacific islands

In 2015, BirdLife and SOP Manu (BirdLife in French Polynesia) launched an ambitious project to restore the Acteon & Gambier island group in French Polynesia, home to four globally threatened bird species. In 2017, five out of the six islands were declared free of invasive species. Research in 2018 shows dramatic recoveries already underway. On Manui Island alone, nesting densities of White-throated Storm Petrel (Endangered) have more than trebled, and those of Murphy's Petrel (Near Threatened) have more than doubled. Additionally, two petrel species have been found breeding on Makaroa, where they were formerly absent, and the Polynesian Ground-dove (Critically Endangered) has spread to the island of Tenarunga.



Polynesian Ground-dove © Marie-Helene Burle Island Conservation



Photo credit © Island Conservation

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Restoring the Marquesas



TEHANI WITHERS
Island Restoration
Manager, SOP Manu

The Marquesas is one of the most isolated archipelagos in the world – located a mere four hour plane ride from Tahiti. The islands are home to unique landscapes, species and culture – and also familiar introduced predators. In 2018 we reported back on successful efforts to eradicate predators on the island of Teuaua – a test run, hopefully, for bigger things.

HOW DID TEUAUA'S ROCKY TERRAIN ADD TO THE CHALLENGE?

Arriving was challenging, as the islet is located outside the protected bay area and often exposed to rough sea currents. We could only approach during high tide (8-9 am), where we would jump from the moving boat onto a very small plateau located at the bottom of the islet. Then to reach the main plateau, you have to climb a 10 m rope. We were lucky to have experienced locals work with us, making landing easier and safer.

WE UNDERSTAND THE LOCAL FAUNA ADDED TO THE DIFFICULTY...

Yes! We had to move the project twice due to the unexpected number of Sooty Terns, who breed year round. We had thousands of birds constantly

screaching and divebombing the team while they worked!

NOW TEUAUA IS RAT-FREE, WHAT IS NEEDED TO SCALE UP THE PROJECT?

We plan to restore another seven sites. In November 2019 a final feasibility study on Mohotani island (the largest uninhabited island) will be carried out. The next step is to raise funds for the operation – securing three million euros. Teuaua was four hectares and the rat eradication was done manually. But for the rest of the off-shore islands, you would need a helicopter, boats, large teams of experts and locals to work 3-6 months on these remote islands and islets. It is a huge project, but it will be worth it to secure the habitat of many bird species threatened by extinction.

T H E Y E A R I N

Forests

The world's natural forests are of critical importance for birds and other biodiversity, natural habitats and ecosystem services. Furthermore, over 1.6 billion people rely heavily on forests for subsistence, livelihoods, employment and income. Yet despite global efforts, rates of natural forest loss remain alarmingly high, with the FAO estimating that 13 million hectares of forest are lost annually. BirdLife's Forests programme works with local communities, governments, the private sector and others to ensure the world's most vital forest areas are appropriately managed and governed – an arrangement that mutually benefits both biodiversity and people.



**BRYNA
GRIFFIN**
Head of Forests
Programme

"The world is finally waking up to the crisis of deforestation, and its implications for biodiversity, climate and all the ecosystem services we depend on. This year, we saw governments and companies making new commitments to end forest loss. BirdLife is able to use our rich experience conserving forests and landscapes around the world to guide and influence their direction, and to help find solutions that work for people and the planet."

Northern Baldpate © Frege/Shutterstock

“We focus much effort on the Atlantic Forest, to secure protection for habitats that are the last refuge of Critically Endangered species.”

ALICE REISFELD Project Manager,
SAVE Brasil

A master plan to protect one of Earth's richest wildlife regions

The Atlantic Forest, spanning the east coast of South America and reaching inland into Paraguay and Argentina, shelters many of the continent's rarest birds. Its biodiversity is thought even to exceed that of the more greatly renowned Amazon rainforest, with new species being discovered still. This is astonishing, considering human disturbance and deforestation has reduced the size of this biome to just 7% of what it was 500 years

ago. It is therefore crucial that there are solid measures in place to restore the forest and protect what remains from further devastation. To this end, [BirdLife Partners Aves Argentina](#), [Guyra Paraguay](#) and [SAVE Brasil](#) have finalised an Atlantic Forest Action Plan. With support from the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation the plan is already underway, planning restoration, improving connectivity between fragmented patches of forest and strengthening existing protected areas.

I N N U M B E R S

NUMBER OF ENDEMIC SPECIES
IN THE
ATLANTIC FOREST

160
mammals

232
birds

6,000+
Insects

236
amphibians

Collaboration from tree to tyre for nature-friendly rubber

The Global Platform on Sustainable Natural Rubber (GPSNR) launched this year, with BirdLife as a founding member. It aims to improve the sustainability of rubber usage, 70% of which is fed into the tyre industry, by involving stakeholders along the whole production chain. Suppliers, processors and vehicle manufacturers are now collaborating with each other to collectively decide on how to effect change. The outcomes will benefit everyone involved: besides preventing deforestation and conserving water resources, suppliers gain from larger yields, better labourers' rights and an end to land-grabbing. With 65% of the world's tyre manufacturers enrolled, the GPSNR shows much promise in transforming the trade.



Rubber trees, Thailand © Bangprikphoto Shutterstock



© Jonathan Eames

Sustainable rice benefits farmers and Critically Endangered birds

In Western Siem Pang, Cambodia, there are now over 200 families selling forest-friendly 'Ibis Rice'. This region is home to Cambodia's national bird, Giant Ibis (a Critically Endangered species that was once thought extinct), as well as 70% of the nation's vulture population. For this reason, BirdLife's Cambodia Programme helped introduce Ibis Rice to the area, which offers farmers a premium price for their crop. In return they agree to use environmentally-friendly practices, and not to expand their land further into the forest. While the local people are enjoying vastly improved livelihoods, the population of the Giant Ibis is also on the rise.

A vibrant Green-headed Tanager is perched on a branch, surrounded by lush green foliage and small purple berries. The bird's plumage is a striking mix of bright green, blue, and yellow. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, creating a natural and serene setting.

I N F O C U S

In late 2018, our Forests Programme launched a pilot initiative called the Forest Landscape Sustainability Accelerator. Modelled on the innovation that powers start-up businesses such as in the tech sector, the Accelerator was set up to tackle the age-old issue of many conservation initiatives being funded on a project-by-project basis – not necessarily the most sustainable approach. The Accelerator will provide financial and technical support to a small number of Partners working on landscapes, helping them access the knowledge and space to create new, sustainable funding models.

T H E Y E A R I N

Capacity Development

Capacity development lies at the very heart of the BirdLife model: building a dedicated and effective partnership of grassroots NGOs who support, guide and collaborate with each other for tangible, sustainable conservation impact. Capacity building is a major component of our work, from science to policy and conservation action, and also management, communications and marketing. With BirdLife present in 115 countries, many of our established Partners step up to provide practical support to their peers – a Partner to Partner support model which has allowed for the creation of independent, self-sustaining organisations in countries such as Madagascar or Fiji, where previously there were no conservation NGOs.



**KIRAGU
MWANGI**
Senior Capacity
Development Manager

"The spirit of the Power of Many was in full force in 2018, with over 100 Partners in attendance at the General Partnership Meeting – a week where 23 opportunities for Partner-to-Partner cooperation were identified. Leading the way are Partners such as Audubon (US) and NABU (Germany), who are facilitating the development of conservation organisations in Armenia, Chile, Colombia and Tanzania. Also at the meeting, a Good Practice Guides for Governance and Strategic and Operational Planning was distributed, for the first time, in French and Spanish – with further guides to come."

“For Nature Mauritanie and hopefully all the partners concerned, the CDF is seen as the **ONLY** opportunity to move towards technical and financial empowerment.”

DJIBRIL DIALLO, Executive Director,
Nature Mauritanie (BirdLife in Mauritania)



Directing crucial funds to where they are needed most

 Our Capacity Development Fund (CDF) is a new and powerful resource with the potential to transform the performance of conservation organisations for the better worldwide. Rather than working on a project-by-project basis, it identifies the organisations most in need of support

and gives them a boost to ensure financial sustainability, facilitate smooth operational procedures and enable delivery of impactful, on-the-ground conservation work in the long-term. The Capacity Development Fund is supported by the MAVA Foundation and the Aage V. Jensen Foundation, and provides Partners with technical

assistance in a range of areas such as human resources management, fundraising and governance. The initiative currently covers twelve Mediterranean countries and three Partners in South America, with the ultimate vision of a robust network of thriving BirdLife Partners in every country of the world.



The 'Panda Team' © Wanyong Ge

Nurturing the next generation of conservationists

Our Young Conservation Leaders programme continues to support those looking to kick-start their career in conservation, whose innovative ideas offer a fresh approach to protecting biodiversity. Funded by the British Birdfair and Aage V. Jensen Foundation,

grants and training opportunities were awarded to three teams in the Pacific and three in Asia this year. One particularly unique project was that of the “Panda Team” in Pingwu County, China – a surprising target species for a bird-based initiative – but besides hosting the largest giant panda population, the area

holds 70% of China’s endemic forest birds. The team are working to understand and resolve overgrazing which threatens both pandas and birds. Other projects include saving the Rufous-headed Hornbill of the Philippines and removing invasive plants from Rapa Iti’s forests in French Polynesia.



© Shannon Anstee

Global Partnership gathers in Belgium for landmark meeting

In September, over 200 representatives from 107 BirdLife Partners met together in Wallonia, Belgium for the Global Partnership Meeting. Held every five years, these formative meetings are a catalyst for

new ideas allowing every Partner to input into shaping BirdLife’s future. Key topics of discussion included how to develop work on IBAs and KBAs, ensure the Partnership is financially resilient and strengthen capacity throughout the network. Several action points were

decided upon, from the proposal of new major projects – such as a new Invasive Alien Species programme in New Zealand – to a simple name change of the ‘Forests of Hope’ programme to ‘Forests’ programme, opening it up to more Partners to get involved.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Connecting communities with the 'Clean-up Crew'



STEPHEN AINA
Research Scientist,
Nigerian Conservation
Foundation

In 2016, the Young Conservation Leaders initiative funded and supported a team to implement a project titled "Fostering Community Capacity and Partnership for Raptors Conservation in Nigeria". This project is an endeavor designed to unite local communities, build capacities and nurture the aspirations of local people to love and protect species of vultures across the remote landscapes of the project location. Our Nigerian Partner, NCF, played a mentoring role in the innovative project, with activities including a conservation soccer tournament.

WHAT IS NCF DOING TO CONSERVE VULTURES IN NIGERIA?

We are building capacity and trusts, in addition to forging partnerships among stakeholders to disband illicit networks of vulture trafficking in rural communities and also assuage or prevent the adoption of existing cultural burden that made vultures major ritual items and pricey trophies in wildlife markets across Nigeria. The YCL scheme ensures that vultures are protected and insulated in-situ against the activities of vulture merchants in rural and isolated pastoral and agrarian communities.

WHAT IS THE MENTORING ROLE NCF IS PLAYING IN THE YCL PROJECT?

The YCL project is a rural outreach scheme dedicated to the protection

of vultures in remote pastoral communities through vulture profiling, community engagement and awareness creation. NCF in its advisory capacity helps the team achieve its rural penetration drive.

WHICH AREAS OF CONSERVATION IN WEST AFRICA WOULD BENEFIT FROM FUTURE CAPACITY BUILDING?

Conservation Science and Technology (To support evidence-based practices), Indigenous Community Conserved Areas (particularly, in communications and community engagement) and Protected Area Management are the three main areas.

T H E Y E A R I N

Local Engagement & Empowerment

Sustainable, successful conservation cannot occur without the consent and active participation of the local people who depend on the very same natural resources for their livelihoods. This is one of the reasons why people lie at the heart of everything we do, with attention to local values, knowledge and voices finding expression across BirdLife's programmes, from policy influence and poverty reduction to climate change adaptation. With limited resources for conservation, the enduring survival of ecosystems and species depend on the willingness of local people to protect and value them, and our ultimate aim is for all 13,000+ IBAs worldwide to be safeguarded by their communities.



**CHARLOTTE
KLINTING**
Global Programme
Coordinator, Local
Engagement &
Empowerment

"In 2018, BirdLife has exemplified how local communities are the best guardians of the environment on which they depend for their livelihoods and cultural heritage. Our Partners build networks of Local Conservation Groups who have the capacity to take action; and work with communities to show how biodiversity goals and sustainable livelihoods can go hand in hand. In this community-centred approach to conservation, BirdLife strives to empower people for positive change."

Middle East | Lebanese farmer © UNDP



“In our search of new models for habitat conservation, the answer has been in the Middle East all along – even though Hima had been neglected for centuries”

ASSAD SERHAL Director, SPNL (BirdLife in Lebanon)

Science and tradition unite in the Middle East

This year, several Partners in the Middle East have made great progress in engaging their Local Conservation Groups: community volunteers who protect the IBAs they live near. **Nature Iraq (BirdLife Partner)** has set up income-generating activities in central Iraq, allowing local people to earn sustainable revenues without damaging important habitats. **RSCH (BirdLife in Jordan)** has developed its

‘Youth Knights’ project, empowering students to take action to conserve their local IBAs. Finally, in Lebanon, **SPNL (BirdLife Partner)** has set up five new Hima zones at IBAs. Hima is a centuries-old tradition of community-protected natural areas originating from the Arabian Peninsula. Historically, it was an essential way to regulate resources in the harsh local climate. SPNL is reviving this tradition with the input of modern conservation science.

Nepal embeds conservation in community forest laws

Nepal has over 21,000 community forests whose resources benefit 2.24 million households.

Through a highly successful pilot scheme completed in May 2018, **Bird Conservation Nepal (BirdLife Partner)** integrated conservation action into the operational plans of 15 community forest user groups. 300 forest users and staff received conservation training through five regional training centres. BCN is now recognised as a key player in conservation in the country. Excitingly, the biodiversity guidelines have been endorsed by the Department of Forests as part of the National Community Forestry Guidelines, which, when adopted, will become a legal requirement in the running of all 21,000 sites.



© Bird Conservation Nepal



Felix Caparro, A member of the indigenous community © Daniel Espinola Jara

Exciting new future for yerba mate agroforestry

The first stage of our flagship project to grow organic, shade-grown Yerba Mate has been completed. Over two years, Guyra Paraguay helped local people to set up agroforestry plantations of this traditional tea-like beverage, to prevent encroachment into San Rafael forest reserve. To date, farmers and indigenous communities have planted 48 hectares of shade-grown yerba mate – but that’s just the start. We are now busy refining certification and quality standards, and are in discussions with a private sector company to get the yerba mate ready to market as a premium sustainable product. Lessons learnt are being compiled into a business plan to guide future projects.



I N
F O C U S

Huge steps were taken in 2018 towards the sustainable use of critical wetlands in Lake Victoria, the world's largest tropical lake. In Uganda, a Ramsar Site Committee has been constituted and empowered through training and support in tourism development at Lutembe bay IBA. In Kenya, training of the Local Conservation Group (LCG) and application of the TESSA (ecosystem services) toolkit to develop a site case for conservation has been completed, focusing on Yala Swamp IBA. In Tanzania, two LCGs have been established and supported to develop community action plans to conserve the Mara Bay and Masirori swamp IBA.

**WHAT WE LEARNED
FROM THE 2018**

STATE OF THE WORLD'S BIRDS





April 2018 saw the release of *State of the World's Birds: Taking the Pulse of the Planet* – a global overview of the state of birds, the pressures they face and the actions underway to save them. Now in its fourth edition, BirdLife's flagship science publication is established as one of the most authoritative and influential syntheses of its kind, and the latest findings are already helping to shape the global conservation agenda

State: The current health of bird populations



Atlantic Puffin
© Richard Bartz

It is now widely acknowledged that we are in the midst of a mass extinction event – the sixth such episode in our planet's 4.5 billion year history, and the first to be driven by the actions of a single species – humankind. Scientists estimate that species are disappearing at a rate 100 to 10,000 times greater than would naturally occur, with perhaps dozens of species going extinct every day. Our lack of knowledge about the natural world means that there is considerable uncertainty as to the true extent of the crisis. A few groups of organisms, however, are well known – none more so than birds.

One in eight birds is threatened with extinction

Sadly, there has been a steady and continuing deterioration in the status of the world's birds since the first comprehensive assessment of the IUCN Red List in 1988. At least 40% of the world's 11,000 bird species now have declining population trends, and 13% – roughly one in eight – are globally threatened with extinction. Threatened species are not evenly distributed amongst bird groups. For instance, there are particularly high proportions of threatened species among cranes (73%), African-Eurasian vultures (68%), albatrosses (68%) and parrots (29%).

The threat of extinction is spreading to once widespread, familiar species

Many globally threatened bird species have tiny populations and very small ranges. Increasingly, however, widely distributed and familiar bird species are also coming under threat of extinction, often as the result of large-scale exploitation and habitat degradation. Until recently, Yellow-breasted Bunting was one of Eurasia's most abundant bird species, breeding across the northern Palaearctic from Finland to Japan. However, since 1980, its population has declined by 90%, whilst its range has contracted by 5,000 km, and the species is now considered Critically Endangered. Although banned, large-scale hunting of this Chinese delicacy continues – in 2001 an estimated one million buntings, known colloquially as 'the rice bird', were consumed in China's Guangdong province alone.

Rampant overexploitation also lies behind the ongoing decline of Grey Parrot (and its sister species, Timneh Parrot). These intelligent, gregarious birds are a favourite pet around the world, and this popularity fuels an illegal trade that now renders both species Endangered. The European Turtle-dove was once a familiar migrant to Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East from the Sahel zone of Africa. Because of habitat

loss and hunting, the species is now declining across its range and has recently been uplisted to Vulnerable.

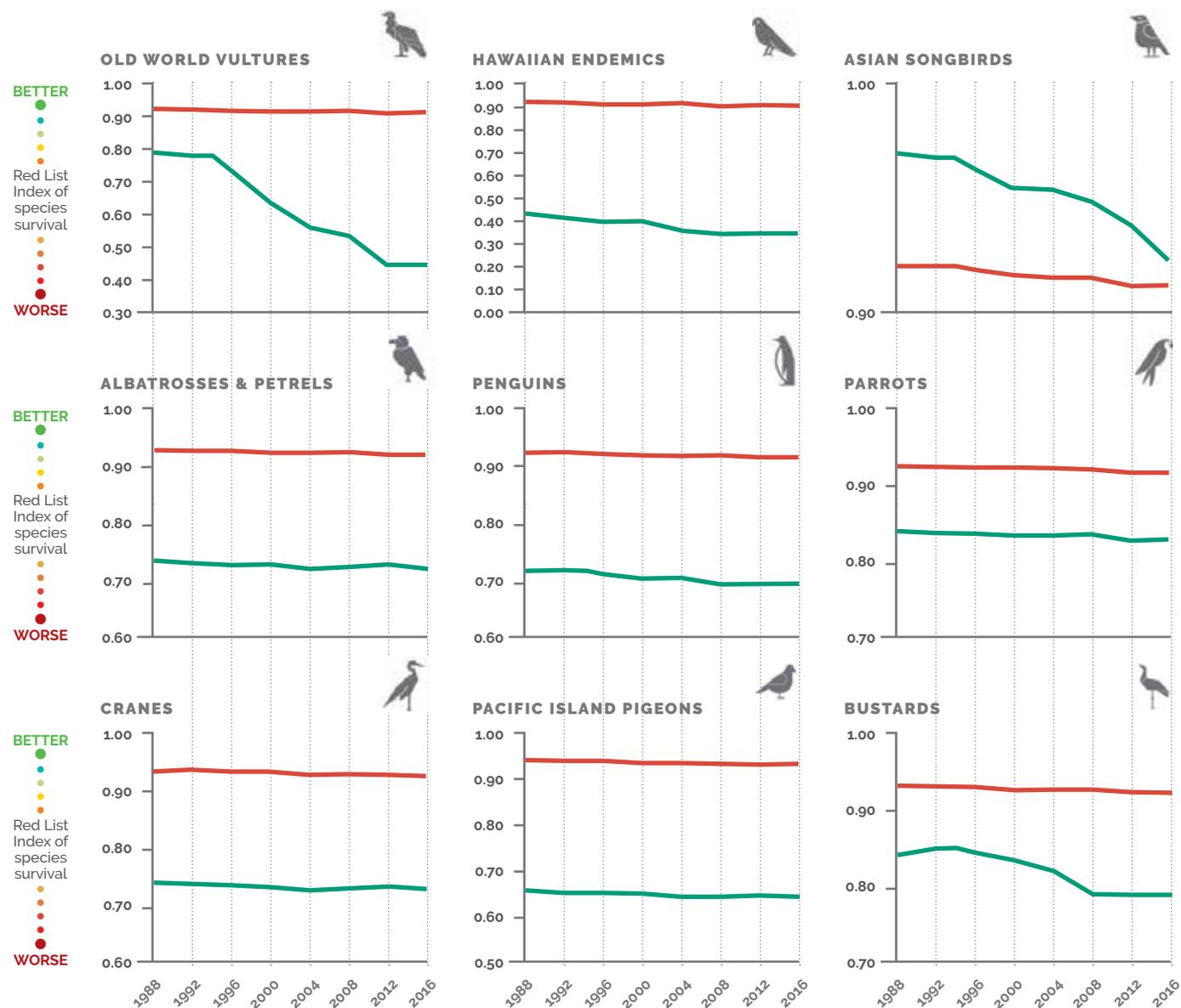
The Snowy Owl is surely one of the most widely recognised birds in the world. They are also widespread, occurring throughout the Arctic tundra of the Northern Hemisphere. Yet they are experiencing a rapid decline, most likely connected to climate change, and have recently been uplisted to Vulnerable. In the marine realm, the depletion of fish through overfishing and climate change has caused rapid declines in widespread and much-loved seabirds such as Atlantic Puffin and Black-legged Kittiwake.

African-Eurasian vulture populations are in freefall

Today, just two species of “Old World” vulture remain Least Concern. Of the rest, eight are classified as Critically Endangered and are at risk of imminent extinction.. Populations in South Asia were the first to collapse, with declines of around 95% between 1993 and 2000. These were principally the result of acute poisoning from livestock carcasses contaminated with the veterinary drug diclofenac. More recently, vultures have begun to disappear across vast swathes of Africa.

RED LIST INDICES FOR SELECTED DECLINING BIRD GROUPS

■ All bird species ■ Specific bird groups NOTE: An RLI score of 1 equates to all birds being categorised Least Concern, hence none are expected to go extinct in the near future. A score of 0 means all species have gone extinct. Vertical axes differ.



Pressure: Why birds are declining

The threats to birds are many and varied, but invariably of humanity's making. Agricultural expansion, logging, overexploitation, urbanisation, pollution, disturbance and the effects of invasive alien species are all driving bird declines and diminishing the natural world. In the long term, human-induced climate change may prove to be the most serious threat of all. Most species are impacted by multiple threats and many threats are interrelated. For example, land clearance for agriculture is often preceded by deforestation or wetland drainage. Similarly, climate change is extending the area of suitable habitat for Avian Malaria-transmitting mosquitoes.

Agriculture is the biggest threat to globally threatened birds

The expansion of agriculture, and the resultant habitat destruction, is one of the greatest threats to the world's biodiversity. The area of Earth's land surface given over to agriculture has increased more than six-fold over the past 300 years, from less than 6% in 1700 to more than 38% today. The conversion of natural habitats to farmland is now occurring most rapidly in tropical regions – driven by global demand for commodities such as coffee, cocoa, sugar, palm oil and soya.

For globally threatened birds, agricultural expansion and intensification is the most pervasive menace, impacting 1,091 species (74%). Logging affects 734 species (50%); invasive alien species threaten 578 (39%) species and hunting and trapping puts 578 (35%) species at risk.

There is mounting evidence that neurotoxic insecticides known as neonicotinoids are having a detrimental impact on farmland birds. Neonicotinoids are widely used across North America, Europe and elsewhere to pre-treat crops, where they can collect in high concentrations in surface water and on the surface of seeds. A recent study from the USA found that migrating White-crowned Sparrows exposed to concentrations of neonicotinoids lost a quarter of their body mass and fat stores. The neurotoxin also impaired their migratory orientation.

Climate change is a growing concern

Climate change represents an emerging and increasingly serious threat – currently affecting 33% of globally threatened species – and one that often exacerbates existing threats. A recent review of the scientific literature shows that nearly one quarter of bird species so far studied have been negatively affected by climate change. Given that scientific research has been largely limited to Europe and North America, this figure is certainly an underestimation, and indicates that even the



White-crowned Sparrow
© Tim Lenz

relatively modest temperature increase experienced to date has had a considerable impact. Recent bird population trends in Europe and North America show a strong and consistent signal of climate change. Warm-adapted species have increased in abundance over recent decades, while cool-adapted species have decreased in numbers.

Human overconsumption lies behind the biodiversity crisis

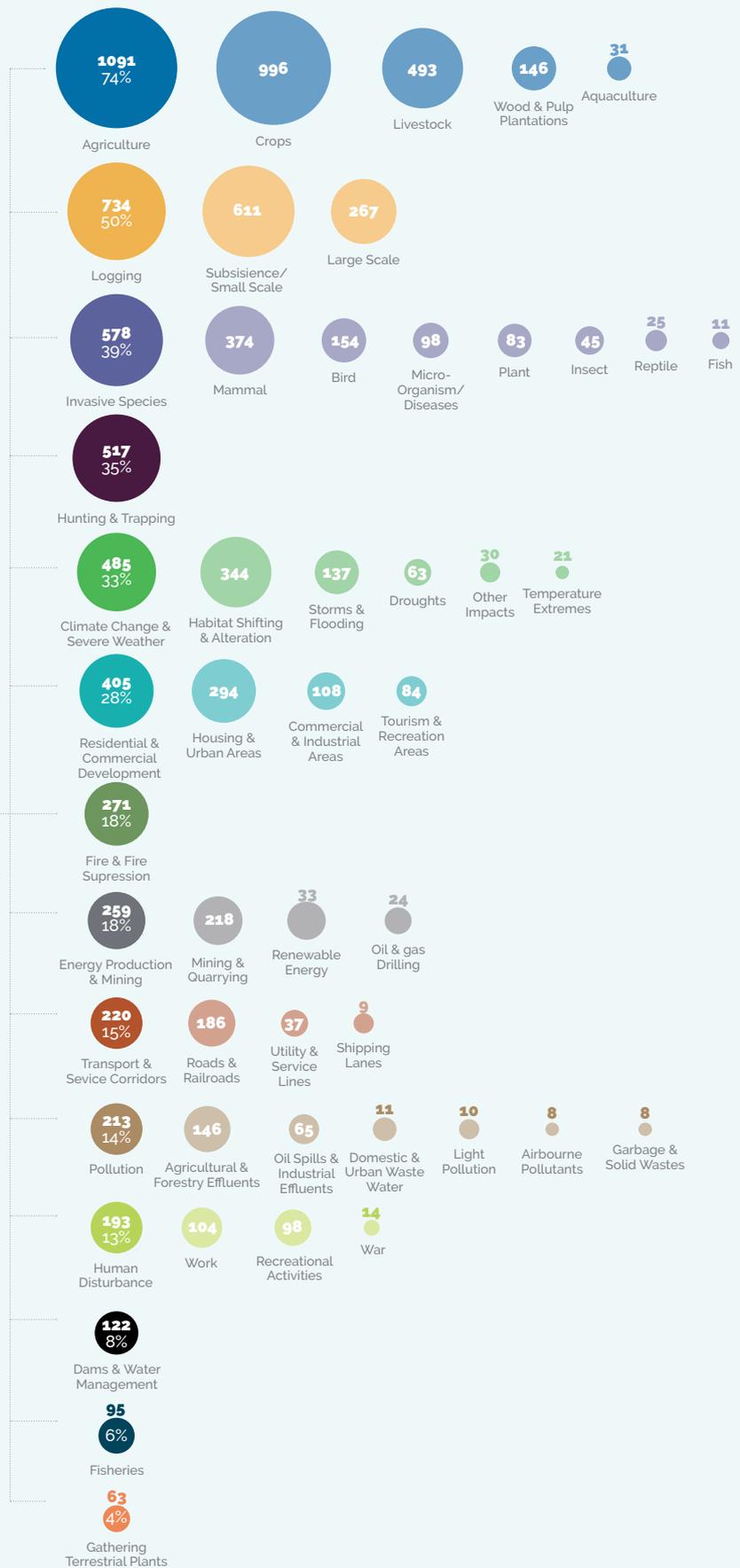
Behind all threats to birds are bigger-picture issues relating to a rise in population and individual consumption. These are worsened by imbalances in power and wealth, an outdated economic system and inefficient resource use. Addressing these underlying causes is challenging, and requires radical changes to the way we run our global economies and live our individual lives, yet it is essential if the impending biodiversity crisis is to be averted. Earth's natural capital must now sustain 7.6 billion people, including a rapidly expanding global middle class that enjoys an unprecedented level of individual material consumption.

Humanity is now living beyond the biological capacity of the planet: demand for resources is now equivalent to more than 1.7 Earths. The natural systems that underpin all life are beginning to buckle. The race is on to develop sustainable methods of living before our vital ecological systems and cycles are irreversibly compromised.

THREATS DRIVING DECLINES

BirdLife systematically evaluates the threats facing globally threatened bird species as part of its work assessing avian extinction risk for the IUCN Red List. This provides an important insight into the principal drivers not only of bird extinction, but of the biodiversity crisis more widely. In turn, this informs our conservation strategies and approaches.

1,469
GLOBALLY THREATENED BIRD SPECIES



Response: The actions needed to conserve birds and biodiversity



The pressures on the world's flora and fauna and the habitats where they live are considerable. Yet, conservation does work. For birds in particular, there are numerous inspiring success stories that demonstrate that, given sufficient resources and political will, species can recover and habitats can be restored. The BirdLife Partnership has been responsible for many of these successes, and continues to find innovative ways to safeguard biodiversity in a way that benefits and involves local communities and the wider society.

Protecting habitats is essential

Targeting conservation at individual species has had some phenomenal results, but this needs to be complemented by broader-scale strategies. BirdLife is responsible for identifying a network of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs). Around the world, the IBA inventory has helped inform the designation of hundreds of protected areas, especially within the European Union.

The ambitious Trillion Trees programme, a partnership between WWF, WCS and BirdLife, is aiming for one trillion trees planted, protected and restored by 2050. The initiative builds on BirdLife's already extensive programme of work on forest restoration.

At sea, BirdLife's Albatross Task Force has made huge advances in preventing seabirds from becoming accidentally hooked and drowned in fishing gear. In South Africa, albatross bycatch in the hake deep-sea trawl fleet was reduced by 99% over six years through the introduction of measures such as bird-scaring lines. BirdLife is working to replicate these spectacular results throughout the industry.

We can do it – but decision-makers need to act now

We know what needs to happen, and it is eminently achievable – so long as there is sufficient action by decision-makers. Everyone has a role to play in tackling the current unsustainable impacts of human activities on the planet. Individually, we need to minimise the effects of our lifestyles on biodiversity, particularly through consumption and carbon emissions. But governments have a particular responsibility to implement policies that lead to environmentally sustainable development. Many have made commitments through the Convention on Biological Diversity and other multilateral environmental agreements, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals, to end the biodiversity crisis. It is the role of governments to work with civil society and the business sector to ensure that these commitments are met.

BACK FROM THE BRINK

At least 25 bird species have been brought back from the edge of extinction so far this century.

The following species have all been downlisted from Critically Endangered since 2000 due to conservation action. There are additionally Critically Endangered species for which conservation action is happening, but which is not yet sufficient to warrant downlisting, yet without which the species would surely have deteriorated further and perhaps even vanished altogether.



Red-billed Curassow
Crax blumenbachii
downlisted to Endangered in 2000



Pink Pigeon
Nesoenas mayeri
downlisted to Endangered in 2000



Black-faced Spoonbill
Platalea minor
downlisted to Endangered in 2000



Asian Crested Ibis
Nipponia nippon
downlisted to Endangered in 2000



Rarotonga Monarch
Pomarea dimidiata
downlisted to Endangered in 2000
and Vulnerable in 2012



Rodrigues Warbler
Acrocephalus rodericanus
downlisted to Endangered in 2000
and Near Threatened in 2013



Tongan Scrubfowl
Megapodius pritchardii
downlisted to Endangered in 2004



Christmas Boobook
Ninox natalis
downlisted to Vulnerable in 2004



Zino's Petrel
Pterodroma madeira
downlisted to Endangered in 2005



Abbott's Booby
Papadula abbotti
downlisted to Endangered in 2005



Seychelles White-eye
Zosterops modestus
downlisted to Endangered in 2005
and to Vulnerable in 2016



Seychelles Magpie-robin
Copsychus sechellarum
downlisted to Endangered in 2005



Echo parakeet
Psittacula eques
downlisted to Endangered in 2007



Nukuhiva Imperial-pigeon
Ducula galeata
downlisted to Endangered in 2008



Chatham Petrel
Pterodroma axillaris
downlisted to Endangered in 2009
and to Vulnerable in 2015



Lear's Macaw
Anodorhynchus leari
downlisted to Endangered in 2009



Mauritius Fody
Foudia rubra
downlisted to Endangered in 2009



Yellow-eared Parrot
Ognorhynchus icterotis
downlisted to Endangered in 2010



Azores Bullfinch
Pyrrhula murina
downlisted to Endangered in 2010
and to Vulnerable in 2016



Campbell Teal
Anas nesiotis
downlisted to Endangered in 2011



Pale-headed Brush-finch
Atlapetes pallidiceps
downlisted to Endangered in 2011



St Helena Plover
Charadrius sanctaehelenae
downlisted to Vulnerable in 2016



Amami Thrush
Zoothera major
downlisted to Near Threatened in 2016



Guadalupe Junco
Junco insularis
downlisted to Endangered in 2016



Montserrat Oriole
Icterus oberi
downlisted to Vulnerable in 2016



Finances 2018

The BirdLife Secretariat has continued its high levels of income during 2018 with total income of £21.8 million compared to £22.3 million in 2017, and £16.0 million in 2016. The Secretariat's total expenditure has increased to £20.6 million in 2018 compared to £19.7 million in 2017. The increase in expenditure relates to restricted spend, which enabled the organisation to deliver extraordinary conservation results.

The Secretariat's unrestricted net income before transfers showed a surplus of £168,691. This is a great result, compared to a deficit in 2017 of £185,851, with various factors having contributed to this positive result.



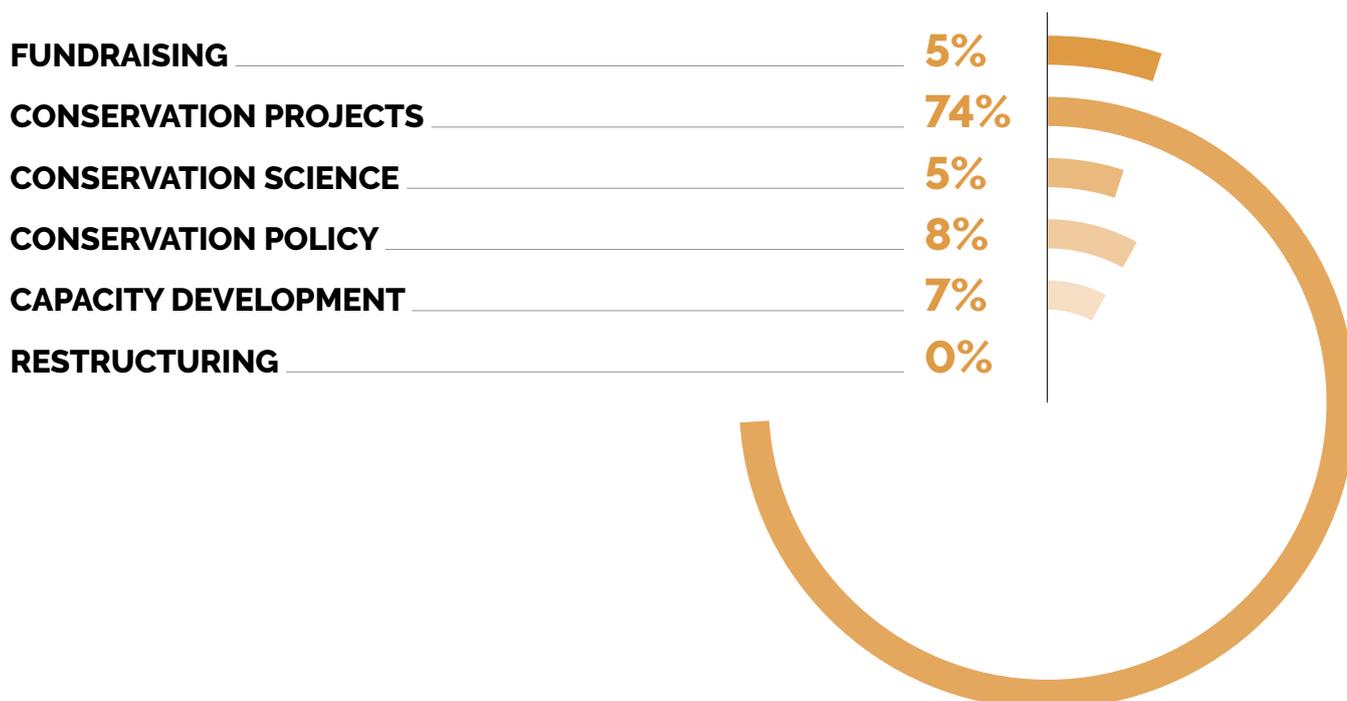
Income, £'000s	2018	2017
Events and other	1,278	1,111
Corporations	1,662	1,619
Grants from institutions and foundations	15,108	15,890
Individual donations, memberships and legacies	1,383	1,402
BirdLife Partners	2,318	2,115
Investments	88	150
Total	21,837	22,287

Expenditure, £'000s	2018	2017
Fundraising	1,049	825
Charitable Expenditure	19,579	18,827
- Preventing Extinctions	1,670	2,457
- Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas	3,711	3,837
- Migratory Birds and Flyways	2,431	2,244
- Marine	2,716	1,526
- Invasive Alien Species	731	368
- Forests of Hope	3,212	2,569
- Climate Change	189	250
- Local Engagement and Empowerment	688	681
- Capacity Development	1,467	1,611
- Conservation Science	1,123	1,036
- Conservation Policy	1,641	2,040
Restructuring	0	208
Total	20,628	19,652

Income



Expenditure



Together we are BirdLife International Partnership for nature and people



www.birdlife.org

BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation partnership. Through our unique local-to-global approach, we deliver high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people