

# DoD Bird Conservation Focus Area: Stewardship

## *Bird Conservation on Military Lands*



### Mission

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

### DoD Bird Conservation — “Partners in Flight”

The Department of Defense (DoD) engages in a wide array of bird and habitat conservation activities. Collectively, these activities are known as Partners in Flight, to mirror related activities being implemented at the national and international levels. Through these efforts, DoD identifies strategies, goals, and priorities for key areas that support and enhance the military mission: **stewardship**, partnerships/cooperation, communication and education, habitat and

species management, bird/animal aircraft strike hazard, monitoring, research, encroachment minimization, and quality of life. These goals and priorities outline DoD’s vision for developing and implementing conservation actions that support the mission while minimizing impacts to bird species and their habitats. These key focus areas enable DoD to better integrate programs for migratory and resident birds into existing natural resources and land management programs.

### Goal: Stewardship

Provide technical assistance to installation natural resource managers for adequately addressing migratory bird conservation in INRMPs.

### Background

Over the last 200 years, the U.S. population has skyrocketed from about 8 million to more than 300 million. In that time, people have harvested resources for energy and food, built



*Several multi-year DoD-funded projects focus on studying Burrowing Owls on DoD installations, as well as the species’ migratory routes and wintering grounds.*

*Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

cities, and developed and grown industries, often failing to consider environmental consequences. As a result, we have lost a part of our natural heritage, degrading and depleting the resources upon which our quality of life depends. For example, we have lost more than half of our nation’s original wetlands, 98% of our tallgrass prairies, and virtually all virgin forests east of the Rocky Mountains. Without habitats to provide feeding, resting, and nesting opportunities, bird species across the country also are declining. For those species that nest only in arid lands, 75% are in decline, while in the Hawaiian Islands, as many as 71 bird species may already have gone extinct.

DoD is required by law and by purpose to be a good steward of its lands. This means taking care of the land and resources so that wildlife and habitat will be self-sustaining, and so testing and training activities can continue. Proper stewardship requires staff who are professionally trained in biological and wildlife sciences, who are knowledgeable of what resources are available on military lands, and who understand how these resources function synergistically. Maintaining qualified staff and ensuring proper stewardship in a time of unprecedented urban growth and development is challenging, but vital.

### Priorities

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

- Maintain a network of professionally certified installation biologists to support the mission by implementing installation INRMPs, thereby reducing the risk of species becoming listed as threatened or endangered in the future.
- Educate installation leadership about the importance of including bird conservation management and avian protection methods in INRMPs and NEPA documents.
- Support DoD Working Group Representatives who work to ensure that stewardship and bird management activities on military installations meet, enable, or enhance training capabilities.
- Provide opportunities for increasing professional knowledge and/or certification to ensure sound

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