



PACIFIC BIRDS

HABITAT JOINT VENTURE

Conservation Report

2023-2024



Staff

Monica Iglecia, U.S. Coordinator
Andrew Huang, Canada Coordinator
Sara Evans-Peters, U.S. Assistant Coordinator
Laura Farwell, Conservation Coordinator - Coastal Wetlands
Helen Raine, Conservation Coordinator - Hawai'i
Natalie Myers, Communications and Marketing Coordinator
Bruce Harrison, Chair, Canadian Technical Team
Kathleen Moore, Conservation Planner, Canada
Eric Riley, Umpqua Oak Partnership Liaison
Jaime Stephens, Landbird Science Support

International Management Board

David Bradley, Birds Canada
Joel Gerwein, California Coastal Conservancy
Greg Green, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Blair Hammond, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment and Climate Change Canada
Canada Co-Chair
Glenn Lamb, Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts
Jasper Lament, Nature Trust of British Columbia
Cameron Mack, Wildlife Habitat Canada
Sarah Nathan, Ducks Unlimited Canada
Hillary Page, Nature Conservancy of Canada
Davia Palmeri, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Amy Pocewicz, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Region
Kim Richardson, B.C. Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship
Nanette Seto, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Columbia-Pacific Northwest & Pacific Islands Regions
U.S. Co-Chair
Afsheen Siddiqi, Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Kyle Spragens, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

pacificbirds.org | info@pacificbirds.org



Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*)
Andy Reago and Chrissy McClarren,
Creative Commons



Vision

A Pacific Region United for Bird Habitat Conservation: By working together, we will ensure wild birds thrive in abundant and diverse habitats that we all help safeguard for future generations.

Mission

Creating the Ideal Environment for Bird Habitat Conservation

Land Acknowledgement

Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture acknowledges that the lands on which we work are the traditional lands of many different Indigenous nations. Acknowledging these lands, and the signed treaties where applicable, reminds us that our places of work, where we live and where we gather, are on the traditional lands of more than 350 Tribes, First Nations, and Indigenous Peoples, people who have resided here since time immemorial and still do.

Cover Photo:
Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*)
Peter Pearsall USFWS

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Pacific Birds' International Management Board and staff at a restoration site on the Chinook River near Long Beach, WA.





View from Moku o Lo'e,
at the Hawai'i Institute
of Marine Biology,

Note from the Board Co-chairs

Dear Pacific Birds Partners,

The last year was marked by significant growth for Pacific Birds, with advancements in staff capacity, board leadership, strategic direction, and strengthened support for partners and regional partnerships. We welcomed new full and part-time staff who are helping translate and deliver science and knowledge to communities and new audiences. New board members are bringing valuable regional perspectives and are enhancing the leadership of the Joint Venture.

We introduced a new strategic framework that outlines Pacific Birds' approach to conservation, our priorities, and our commitments to Indigenous communities. Together with many partners, we launched strategic plans for Oak and Prairie, Coastal Wetlands, and Hawai'i's Wetlands. This suite of planning documents, from framework to strategic plans, provide a solid foundation for the next decade of conservation investments.

Large-scale funds have been secured on behalf of coastal habitats and Western forests. In the last five years, more than \$73 million USD have been secured on behalf of Pacific Birds conservation priorities in the United States, leveraged by nearly \$72 million. In the last year, almost \$20 million CAD (\$14.1 million USD) have advanced the securement, stewardship, and restoration of habitats in British Columbia. Grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation National Coastal Resilience Fund and America the Beautiful Challenge, and North American Wetland Conservation Act are strengthening coastal resilience, protecting Threatened and Endangered waterbirds in Hawai'i, and improving wetlands and breeding habitats for migratory birds across the Pacific Birds geography.

Ongoing collaborations with other Migratory Bird Habitat Joint Ventures, Klamath Bird Observatory, and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology are helping refine objectives for migratory birds and habitat conservation. Strengthened collaborations with Natural Resource Conservation Service and Pheasants Forever are bringing much-needed capacity to Oak and Prairie conservation efforts in Oregon.

Meaningful hosted events brought together community leaders, experts, and conservation partners to share knowledge and lessons learned, from the Pacific Northwest to Hawai'i. Focused efforts to build trusting relationships between Indigenous and Tribal partners and conservation groups have helped weave a fabric of community working to support healthy habitats for birds and people across the Pacific Birds service area.

Rooted in all of these accomplishments is the vast network of people and partnerships working together for a collective outcome. You are the reason for these shared successes. As we look back on 2024, we can clearly see how much we have achieved together. Looking to the new year and beyond, we are optimistic that the recently released plans will serve as a guiding light. We look forward to working with you towards a Pacific region united for bird habitat conservation.

With gratitude,



Nanette Seto
U.S. Co-Chair, International
Management Board



Blair Hammond
Canada Co-Chair, International
Management Board



Monica Iglecia
U.S. Coordinator



Andrew Huang
Canada Coordinator

International Management Board



In 2024, we welcomed two new members to the Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture International Management Board. Amy Pocewicz is the Deputy Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds - Alaska for the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife. Kim Richardson is the Director of Terrestrial Habitat for the B.C. Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship. [Learn more about Amy and Kim here.](#)

Amy Pocewicz (left), and Kim Richardson (right)



We thank Sara O'Brien and Jen Davis for their service on the Management Board, invaluable contributions, and ongoing commitment to the success of the Joint Venture. While their perspectives will be missed, Pacific Birds wishes them the best in their future endeavors!

Sara O'Brien (left), and Jen Davis (right)



Please join us in thanking Nanette Seto for serving as the US Co-Chair of the International Management Board and welcoming Kyle Spragens as he steps into this leadership role for Pacific Birds in 2025.

Nanette Seto (left), and Kyle Spragens (right)

Changes to Pacific Birds Staff

Thank you to Dave Mehlman for six years as the Joint Venture's Grants Liaison. In this role, Dave supported U.S. partners in developing, writing, submitting, and administering NAWCA standard and small grants.



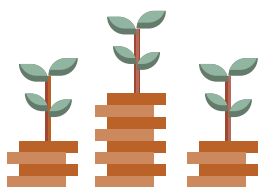
Welcome to Jaime Stephens as our Landbird Science Support. Jaime Stephens is the Director of Conservation at Klamath Bird Observatory and a long-time collaborator. She began working with Pacific Birds formally in 2024 to support and facilitate the implementation of biological planning, evaluation, knowledge building, and knowledge transfer to enhance landbird conservation activities within the Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture Conservation Priorities.



Impact at a Glance

\$36.1 M

in federal dollars leveraged through partners in the past year



6x

more funds managed to advance conservation efforts compared to 2019

\$73.3 M

secured on behalf of Conservation Priorities in the last 5 years



\$127.6 M

in non-federal dollars leveraged through partners in the past year

473 M acres

in Pacific Birds geographic region

\$71.7 M

leveraged on behalf of Conservation Priorities in the last 5 years

193

coastal wetland species regularly occur in the Pacific Birds continental region



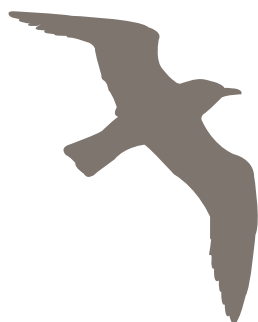
27,966 acres

protected and restored in the past year



5

endangered and threatened, globally endemic waterbirds in Hawai'i supported by our work



The Numbers by the Place

Take a look at some of the high-level impacts of Pacific Birds' staff and partner work in the Pacific Flyway. These numbers reflect the investments of Partnership Grants since 2020, and collaborative impacts in 2023 - 2024.

Washington

Through Pacific Birds Partnership Grants since 2020, we have:

- ▶ Distributed \$123,000 in funds
- ▶ Leveraged \$96,511 in partner funds
- ▶ Protected or restored 401 acres
- ▶ Involved 88 partner organizations
- ▶ Produced 12 grant proposals

As a result of staff support to partners in 2023-2024, we helped:

- ▶ Generate \$18,162,933 for partners
- ▶ Leverage \$20,907,177 in partner funds

Oregon

Through Pacific Birds Partnership Grants since 2020, we have:

- ▶ Distributed \$179,102 in funds
- ▶ Leveraged \$387,413 in partner funds
- ▶ Restored or enhanced 361 acres
- ▶ Created and sustained 12 positions
- ▶ Involved 169 partner organizations
- ▶ Produced 31 grant proposals

As a result of staff support to partners in 2023-2024, we helped:

- ▶ Generate \$16,395,614 for partners
- ▶ Leverage \$14,395,614 in partner funds

California

Through Pacific Birds Partnership Grants since 2020, we have:

- ▶ Distributed \$34,000 in funds
- ▶ Leveraged \$49,000 in partner funds
- ▶ Protected, restored, or enhanced 403 acres
- ▶ Involved 31 partner organizations
- ▶ Produced one grant proposal
- ▶ Developed two conservation plans

Alaska

Through Pacific Birds Partnership Grants since 2020, we have:

- ▶ Distributed \$72,075 in funds
- ▶ Leveraged \$533,039 in partner funds
- ▶ Protected 309 acres
- ▶ Involved 21 partner organizations
- ▶ Produced two grant proposals

As a result of staff support to partners in 2023-2024, we helped:

- ▶ Generate \$1,620,550 for partners
- ▶ Leverage \$1,396,800 in partner funds

B.C.

In the last year:

- ▶ Invested 19.7 million in land securement, habitat restoration, conservation planning, partnership building & more.
- ▶ Secured 406 acres
- ▶ Restored 1,423 acres
- ▶ Stewarded 34,081 acres

Hawai'i

Through Pacific Birds Partnership Grants since 2020, we have:

- ▶ Distributed \$206,525 in funds
- ▶ Leveraged \$1,331,406 in partner funds
- ▶ Restored or enhanced 654 acres
- ▶ Involved 114 partner organizations
- ▶ Produced 18 grant proposals

As a result of staff support to partners in 2023-2024, we helped:

- ▶ Generate \$1,209,300 for partners
- ▶ Leverage \$350,500 in partner funds



2024 Dr. Fern Duvall Conservation and Collaboration Award

[We are pleased to announce that Jason Vercelli, Wildlife Biologist with the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources - Division of Forestry and Wildlife \(DOFAW\) has been selected for the 2024 Dr. Fern Duvall Conservation and Collaboration Award.](#)

Jason was nominated for his dedication to the [Kawai'ele Wildlife Sanctuary & Mānā Wetland](#) on West Kaua'i, his wetland expertise, and his contributions to outreach, wetland management, and predator control. In his 16 years working at the sanctuary, he has helped restore the 34-acre Kawai'ele wetland and established 50 additional acres of wetland next to it, which has already proved valuable to endangered waterbirds and a myriad of migratory birds. The Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture (Pacific Birds) review committee agreed that these accomplishments embody what we wish to celebrate in the conservation community and reflect Fern's spirit.

This award was started by [Pacific Birds in memory of Dr. Fern Duvall](#), to honor his incredible legacy. Fern helped shape Pacific Birds' conservation efforts in Hawai'i and was a generous mentor, gentle leader, and a trusted guide, particularly to young conservationists. The award recognizes the conservation efforts of individuals who embody the innovative, inclusive, humble, and collaborative spirit that Fern brought to conservation endeavors.



Jason is a committed conservationist, focused on restoring wetlands and sharing their value with people, native waterbirds, their habitat, and much more. Throughout his work, Jason has brought in thousands of volunteers, students, and interns to work at and learn about what makes Kawai'ele and Mānā wetlands unique. He also leads Kaua'i DOFAW's Rapid Response for Brown Tree Snakes (*Boiga irregularis*) and Mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*). Congratulations, Jason for this well-deserved honor.

Top: Jason Vercelli, 2024 Fern Awardee, Middle: Nēnē or Hawaiian Goose (*Branta sandvicensis*) at Kawai'ele, Jason Vercelli, Bottom: Volunteers at Kawai'ele, Jason Vercelli



A Strategic Framework for Pacific Birds

Pacific Birds catalyzes habitat conservation to benefit birds, other wildlife, and people, informed by the best available science and knowledge. The new [Strategic Framework](#) defines the focus and work of this large-scale partnership.



The Heart of the Framework

The Pacific Birds International Management Board is prioritizing **conservation in coastal habitats and Western forests within the Pacific Birds service area**. Within coastal habitats, the focus will center on estuaries, freshwater wetlands, and shallow marine habitats in coastal watersheds in the United States and Canada. Within Western forests, the focus will center on oak and prairie habitats in the Pacific Northwest, and riparian forests in British Columbia. Across the priority habitats, working collaboratively on natural and working lands managed by public, private, Tribal, and Indigenous entities is essential for conservation success.



Service Pillars

Pacific Birds service pillars represent the approach the Joint Venture takes to advance conservation.



Indigenous Acknowledgements and Commitments

The work of Pacific Birds and partners involves the conservation, protection, and enhancement of wildlife and habitat that directly impacts Indigenous communities. We acknowledge the need for meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities throughout the implementation of this work. Pacific Birds names [three actions in support of stewarding a more inclusive and equitable future](#).

Oak and Prairie - p.11



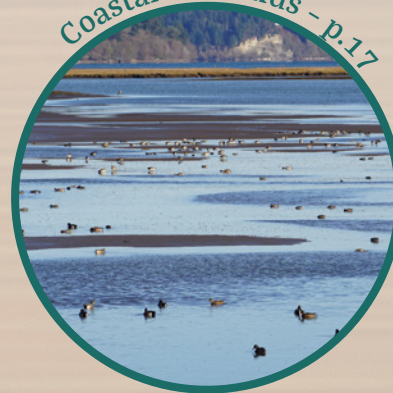
Western Forests

Riparian Forests - p.15

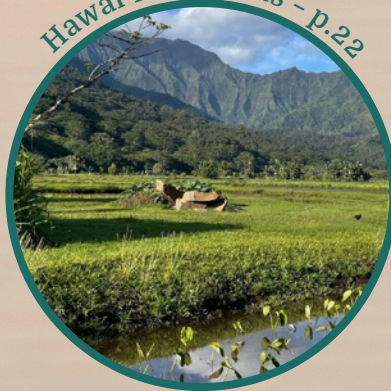


Conservation Priorities

Coastal Wetlands - p.17



Hawai'i Wetlands - p.22



Coastal Habitats

Background photo: Great Blue Heron at Siletz Bay, OR, Peter Pearsall, USFWS

Circles (top to bottom): Oregon Oak Acorns, Edward Rooks, Creative Commons; Little Qualicum River, Nature Trust of British Columbia; Bill Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS, A. LaValle, Hanalei *lo'i kalo* (taro pondfield), H. Raine



Conservation
Priority

Western Forests: Oak and Prairie

This has been a big year for Oak and Prairie conservation in the Pacific Northwest. The new, partner-centered investment strategy, [Prairie, Oaks, and People](#) was completed and will help guide investment in oak and prairie landscapes across the Pacific Northwest. Seven significant grants were secured for oak and prairie conservation totaling \$33 million in funds generated for partners, and work began on a previously awarded America the Beautiful Challenge grant. A new website for the Oak Alliance and the launch for the Decade of the Oak are in development. And, a National Wildlife Refuge Complex is expanded to protect key oak and prairie habitats and benefit people and the climate.

Camass (Camassia spp.) in Bloom, USFS, Roger Peterson



Sara Evans-Peters speaking at the Willamette Valley Conservation Area ceremony.

A New USFWS Wildlife Refuge: the Willamette Valley Conservation Area

[A new 600-acre addition to the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex](#) in Oregon emerged from a collaboration with the FWS and the Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative. The new Willamette Valley Conservation Area builds upon the success of local partnership and conservation planning. This significant addition to the National Wildlife Refuge system will benefit people, birds, local community, and support resilience to a changing climate.

Two New Habitat Conservation Specialists Join the Pacific Birds partnership

[Two positions](#), supported through a new collaboration between Pheasants Forever, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Pacific Birds, are filling much-needed capacity gaps in strategic locations and accelerating on-the-ground conservation of oak and prairie habitat across western Oregon.

- ▶ Csanyi Matusicky is a Habitat Conservation Specialist focused on supporting oak and prairie conservation in southwest Oregon. Csanyi spearheads the Umpqua Prescribed Burn Association, a community group working to enhance forest resilience against wildfires, invasive species, and natural disasters through prescribed burns, restorative practices, and traditional land stewardship. [The group completed its first burn on July 1st](#), setting the stage for future work in the area.
- ▶ Alex Worth is a Habitat Conservation Specialist focused on supporting oak and prairie conservation in Yamhill County. [Alex and Yamhill SWCD hosted a tour](#) of two organic, biodynamic vineyards in different stages of the restoration process, showcasing the innovation and efforts of our proud partnerships.



Csanyi holding a Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) while doing field work in Louisiana.



Alex while fly fishing, holding a Deschutes Redband Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss* ssp.) he caught.



Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network (KSON) partners gathered to review the first oak habitat restoration treatments completed on private lands as part of the Upper Rogue Oak Initiative, Klamath Bird Observatory.

A Big Win for Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie

With bright purple-pink blossoms sprouting from tall stems, the Nelson's checker-mallow (*Sidalcea nelsoniana*) is one of the Northwest's wildflower delights. [In October, the plant was officially removed from the Federal list of Endangered and Threatened species](#), thanks to years of habitat improvements and management, including active burning and mowing, seeding and planting of the species, invasive species control, and outreach to landowners in the Willamette Valley. It is now found at over 50 locations within its habitat, with 30 independent populations actively managed and over 60 known habitat sites in conservation.

Nelson's Checker-mallow (*Sidalcea nelsoniana*), USFWS, Jeff Dillon

Upper Rogue Oak Initiative Implementation Has Begun

The America The Beautiful Challenge brings together funding from multiple federal and private sources to support large-scale projects, spanning both public and private lands. In 2022, the Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network received a grant for the project: Reducing Threats to Imperiled Oak Savannah and Woodland Ecosystems in the Upper Rogue Watershed. This grant was submitted in partnership with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and [Oregon Wildlife Foundation](#) and is being co-managed with Pacific Birds. This year the team broke ground on the project, beginning work that will restore over 3,000 acres of oak habitat using prescribed fire, ecological thinning, weed reduction, and native understory planting.



Advancing Conservation on Private Lands

Pacific Birds and Oregon Natural Resources Conservation Service continue to work together to advance the conservation of Oak and Prairie habitats. This collaboration supports increasing field capacity, providing improved access to a suite of conservation implementation options for landowners, communicating about NRCS programs and accomplishments, partnership development, and technical knowledge transfer to increase the pace and scale of NRCS-leveraged conservation on private lands.

This work is being achieved through an Oak Partnership Liaison in Douglas County, an Oak Agricultural Easement Liaison at the Oregon Agricultural Trust, increased science to implementation and communications capacity, and shared Habitat Conservation Specialists.



Partners touring vineyards doing oak restoration work, Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District.



Conservation
Priority

Western Forests: Riparian Forests

Pacific Birds' work is international and habitat-focused, so while projects may center on birds, many of them benefit a variety of other species. Riparian forests are one of the most at-risk habitats in British Columbia, and this past year, the Joint Venture has helped to secure nearly 50 acres of habitat essential for salmon, birds, and land mammals. At two sites, restoration and land stewardship will be completed in partnership with First Nations in support of ancestral land rights and increasing collaboration across diverse conservation partners.



Alaksen Wildlife Management Area 1, Chantelle Abma, Ducks Unlimited Canada



Little Qualicum River, Nature Trust of British Columbia

Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River – Shelly Road

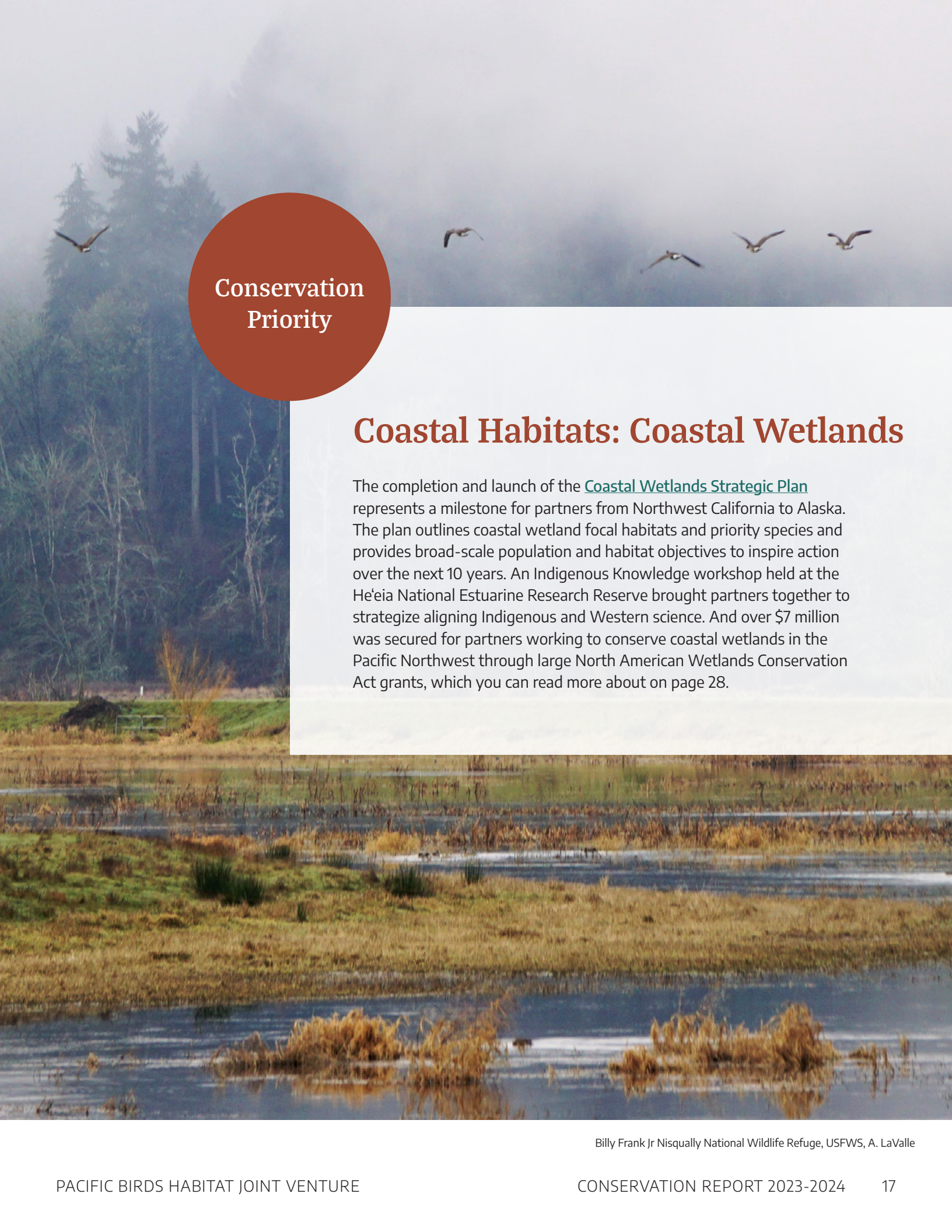
This year, the Nature Trust of British Columbia announced the successful protection of 13 acres (5.2 hectares) of essential salmon and wildlife habitat along the [Kw'a'luxw \(Englishman\) River](#). The river is a key spawning habitat for all five species of Pacific salmon (*Oncorhynchus spp.*), and an important habitat for 250+ species of migratory and breeding birds, Black bear (*Ursus americanus*), Cougar (*Puma concolor*), River otter (*Lontra canadensis*), and Roosevelt elk (*Cervus canadensis roosevelti*). They will collaborate with the Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose) First Nation on the management and long-term stewardship of this area as part of an existing agreement for conservation lands within their traditional territory. This will include the creation of a new sustainable community pathway in the conservation area.

Little Qualicum River

A [new 36-acre \(15-hectare\) parcel of undeveloped land along the Little Qualicum River](#) was secured by the Nature Trust of British Columbia through Environment and Climate Change Canada's Nature Smart Climate Solution Fund. It protects one of the most at-risk zones in British Columbia, the coastal Douglas-fir riparian habitats. As shared by Nature Trust B.C., only 11% of this habitat is currently protected in B.C. The Little Qualicum River is located in the territory of the Qualicum First Nation and is one of the most important salmon-spawning and rearing rivers on the island, supporting both Indigenous and recreational fisheries. The presence of salmon also helps maintain forest health through the nutrients they contribute to the ecosystem post-spawning, supporting other wildlife such as birds and bears.



Conservation
Priority



Coastal Habitats: Coastal Wetlands

The completion and launch of the [Coastal Wetlands Strategic Plan](#) represents a milestone for partners from Northwest California to Alaska. The plan outlines coastal wetland focal habitats and priority species and provides broad-scale population and habitat objectives to inspire action over the next 10 years. An Indigenous Knowledge workshop held at the He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve brought partners together to strategize aligning Indigenous and Western science. And over \$7 million was secured for partners working to conserve coastal wetlands in the Pacific Northwest through large North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants, which you can read more about on page 28.

Billy Frank Jr Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS, A. LaValle

Our work in coastal wetlands spans from Northern California to British Columbia to Alaska. Regional research and conservation actions impact birds and habitats throughout the flyway, helping improve nonbreeding sites and key stopover sites, and climate resilience.



The group at the *loko i'a kalo* (fishpond) at Paepae o He'eia

Re-envisioning Conservation Science and Stewardship

Through a one-year Catalyst Grant from the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Science Collaborative, [Pacific Birds coordinated and facilitated an Indigenous Knowledge workshop](#) as part of a project to elevate Indigenous Knowledge in the NERRS network and to explore practical applications of Indigenous Knowledge and biocultural restoration practices for the conservation of culturally important birds and coastal wetland habitats.

The workshop brought 41 visiting participants together with more than 40 staff and community partners at He'eia. Visiting participants included 24 representatives of 16+ Tribal Nations/Entities (including 19 Tribal Citizens). The workshop was multi-generational and included community leaders, elders, and youth. Participants expressed that the experience was profoundly moving and meaningful, and “in the end, every single person left with a renewed sense of hope for the future” (Kawika Winter, He'eia NERR Director).

As a result of the workshop, partner reserves took steps to increase Indigenous representation on reserve councils, align Tribal and reserve priorities, develop new collaborative biocultural restoration projects with Indigenous and Tribal partners, and co-produce at least four new research proposals building off the catalyst grant. Read the [Key Takeaways report](#) to learn more.



Top: Group in a *lo'i* (taro pondfield) at Kāko'o 'Ōiwi

Bottom: Group at Papahana Kuaola



Sanderlings (*Calidris alba*), Kim Stark

Diving Deep with the Northwest Climate Adaptation Science Center

The Northwest Climate Adaptation Science Center develops science to help fish, wildlife, water, land, and people adapt to climate change in the Northwest. Each year, they organize an actionable science Deep Dive focused on an emerging climate risk by bringing together scientists, researchers, conservationists, resource managers, and policy partners. Over the last year, Pacific Birds staff played a key role by serving on the Deep Dive committee, providing guidance informed by partners and scientific knowledge to the project, and helping communicate the data projects and key findings through outreach and social media in 2024.

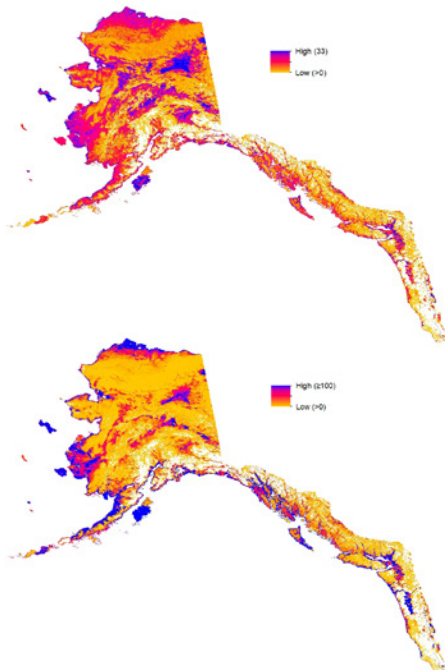
[You can read more about the project and tools here.](#)



JV-eBird collaborators, including Laura Farwell of Pacific Birds, present at the American Ornithological Society Annual Meeting.

A species relative abundance map (top), showcasing areas that support large numbers of waterfowl, and a species richness map (bottom), showcasing areas with high waterfowl diversity for 39 species of waterfowl in the Pacific Birds geography, over the course of the year.

This is just one example of the type of information we are gaining through this collaboration.



Bird Science: Joint Venture x eBird Collaboration Continues

Through continued collaboration between Pacific Birds, six other Joint Ventures (JVs) spanning from Canada to Mexico, and researchers from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, summaries of eBird Status and Trends data products have been developed to address JV information needs. In addition to annual updates of JV-level bird abundance maps and data summaries, this year, population trends were delivered for all species occurring within each JV. Pacific Birds is also leading a collaborative JV-eBird working group, which meets monthly to discuss applications of eBird data products, troubleshoot questions, and share R code and tutorials for data analysis and map creation. In 2024, the JV-eBird working group led a Roundtable Discussion at the annual meeting of the American Ornithological Society about how community science can drive regional conservation and is developing a collaborative scientific publication.

eBird data summaries and maps are already helping JVs across North America by informing the selection of priority species, shedding light on stewardship responsibility, and identifying multi-species hotspots for conservation planning. The data are helping conservation partners and JV staff alike understand habitat use across different periods of the annual life cycle of birds, monitor species population trends, and inform population objectives.



Green eelgrass appears at low tide in the vast wetlands of Izembek Lagoon, at the edge of Izembek Refuge, Kristine Sowl, USFWS

Protected Areas: Refugia and Stepping Stones

[Alongside partners at Birds Canada, Mount Allison University, and Environment and Climate Change Canada, Pacific Birds](#) set out to investigate how coastal waterbird communities that overwinter in B.C. are responding to climate change. Using a 20-year dataset collected as part of a citizen science program led by Birds Canada, the British Columbia Coastal Waterbird Survey (BCCWS), the team modeled occupancy trends along the Pacific coast of Canada.

[Researchers found](#) that around 36% of wintering waterbird species responded positively to protected areas designated in the past 20 years. Specifically, these species were more likely to settle in protected areas and less likely to leave them compared to unprotected sites. Researchers also found that cold-tolerant, long-distance migratory species and those at the top of the food chain showed range shifts into cold-water fjords along the North-Central coast of B.C.

Together, these results indicate the importance of existing protected areas for wintering coastal waterbird populations, particularly more recently designated areas. Despite this, older established protected areas are still important for waterbirds as stepping-stone habitats, helping stabilize populations from farther south as they move north and into Canadian coastal waters. Researchers recommended expanded protections in the coastlines and fjords of North-Central B.C. and improved management of existing protected areas.



Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*),
Laura Wolf, Creative Commons



Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), Peter Pearsall, USFWS

Carey Island: Conserving Exceptional Aquatic Habitat

The Fraser River is known as British Columbia's most productive river system, supporting a multitude of flying, wading, and swimming species. The 50-mile (80 km) stretch of river between Mission and Hope is known as the Heart of the Fraser because of its exceptional aquatic habitat.

In March 2024, the Nature Conservancy of Canada conserved Carey Island in the Heart of the Fraser. Regional partners have been working to conserve this biodiverse area for decades. Carey Island is relatively undeveloped, with pristine aquatic habitats that all three species of Pacific salmon use and spawn in, along with the threatened White Sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*). Bird species that frequent the area include the Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*), Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*), Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*), and American Wigeon (*Mareca americana*) - all of which are priority waterfowl species identified in the [B.C. Implementation Plan](#). The protection of this island will ensure its shorelines and waters remain intact and thriving, benefiting birds, mammals, and fish.

Reviving Sturgeon Bank: A New Vision for Marsh Restoration

Within the Fraser River Estuary is Sturgeon Bank tidal marsh, an area experiencing drastic change over the past 40 years, shrinking in size by 30% due to sediment removal to accommodate shipping navigation. Despite this, millions of waterfowl continue to stop here on their migration paths each year or stay for the winter. Forty-seven species of shorebirds, as well as Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*), Trumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*), Tundra Swans (*Cygnus columbianus*), Lesser Snow Geese (*Anser caerulescens*), and dabbling ducks spend time in Sturgeon Bank, along with hundreds of thousands of migrating and wintering waterfowl and raptors.

A project led by Ducks Unlimited Canada is employing new techniques to restore the area and build up the marsh to its former size, supporting biodiversity and enhancing climate resilience and flood protection. Between 2023 and 2024, the team deposited 529,720 cubic feet (15,000 cubic meters) of sediment in the marsh. Ongoing monitoring will help determine if this approach is effective and if so, could be expanded across the Fraser to benefit waterfowl, fish, and surrounding communities.



Conservation
Priority



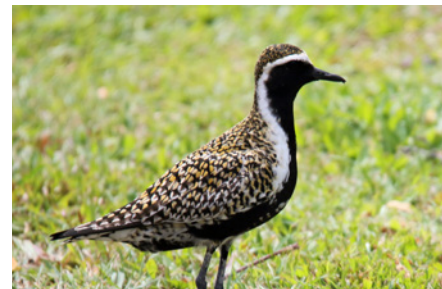
Coastal Habitats: Hawai‘i Wetlands

Pacific Birds’ work in Hawai‘i is rooted in community. The completion of the [Hawai‘i Wetlands Strategic Plan](#) was a product of partner input and guidance from across the state. The Predator Control and Wetland Workshop in April brought people together from across the archipelago to share skills and strengthen collaborations. The work in Hawai‘i even extends across the Pacific, much as migratory birds do, with a new grant that connects people and habitats in Hawai‘i with the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. And local partnerships secured over \$1 million in funds to advance conservation locally.

Ae‘o or Hawaiian Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus knudseni*) at Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge

Climate Change Impacts on the Phenology of Migratory Birds as a Means to Connect Indigenous Pacific Island and Alaskan Communities

A new collaborative project will bring partners in Hawai'i and Alaska together through the migratory birds that both places share. Supported by a Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Center Grant and led by USGS California Water Science Center, Ka Ipu Makani, Chugach Regional Resources Commission, and Pacific Birds staff, this project will elevate Indigenous approaches for tracking changes in annual coastal bird migrations and associated habitats in Moloka'i and southcentral Alaska. Project goals also include increasing the knowledge of climate change for the benefit of community members and the conventional scientific community at large to help with adaptation planning.



Top: 'Ūlili or Wandering Tattler (*Tringa incana*), Mick Thompson, Creative Commons
Bottom: Kōlea or Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*), Dominic Sherony, Creative Commons



Predator Control and Wetland Workshop, Maui, 2024

[In April 2024, Pacific Birds and partners hosted over 150 people at the Predator and Wetland Workshop at the Maui Arts and Cultural Center](#) to share knowledge about predator control, wetland, *lo'i kalo* (taro pondfield), and *loko i'a* (fishpond) management and restoration, and waterbird conservation in Hawai'i.

The workshop was opened by a cultural practitioner Trinette Furtado and included plenary talks, hands-on skill-building, and presentations. Field visits provided opportunities to see the benefits of waterbird conservation and predator control efforts in action including at Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge, Kanahā Pond State Wildlife Sanctuary, and a work day at the Hawai'i Land Trust's Waihe'e Refuge.

Some key takeaways included an interest in smaller-scale, deeper dives located at wetlands sites and focused on key topics of wetland bird management and predator control.



Top: Attendees of the Wetland portion of the conference., Bottom Left: Workshop attendees during the poster session., Middle Right: Mural at Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge., Bottom Right: Celebration for the end of the workshop at Waihe'e Coastal Dunes and Wetlands Refuge.

Moloka'i Wetland Partnership

In 2024 the Moloka'i Wetland Partnership continued to expand. This included developing a new website and carrying out hydrological assessments and community-focused restoration planning at three priority wetlands. Partners also held community meetings and finalized the “Kākāhai'a Pu'uone Community Vision for Restoration” document, a first step towards restoring the National Wildlife Refuge there.

Hanalei Watershed Hui

The Hui received a second National Fish and Wildlife Foundation National Coastal Resilience Fund grant this year (read more about it on page 27!), allowing them to proceed with restoration design to reduce community flooding and improve waterbird habitat in Hanalei. The Hui also completed an outreach campaign alongside community leaders and the Hawaiian Islands Conservation Collective, to raise awareness of Threatened and Endangered waterbirds among Hanalei river users.



Field work and visits at Moloka'i Wetland Partnership sites. Top: Zee Sarr, Bottom: Butch Haase



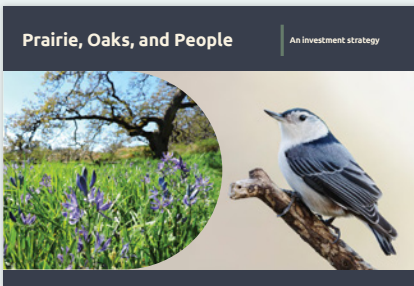
Left: 'Alae 'Ula or Hawaiian Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), USFWS Pacific Region. Right: 'Alae 'Ula or Hawaiian Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) with chick, Alan Schmierer, Creative Commons.

New Partnerships

This year, Pacific Birds initiated work with 'Āina Ho'ōla Initiative at Loko Waka fishpond to co-develop a restoration plan for the site and explore funding to support the removal of invasive species. The site is vitally important for 'Alae Ke'oke'o or Hawaiian Coot (*Fulica alai*) and migratory birds on Hawai'i Island. This work will be partially funded through a 2024 Partnership Grant.

Large-scale Strategies for the Decade Ahead

Three focal strategic plans launched this year will help guide the next decade of conservation in Western Forests and Coastal Habitats. While each plan has specific goals and objectives, each brings us to a new phase of landscape-scale work, focused on implementation and accelerating conservation. Learn about each plan below, and find the full documents on our website.



Prairie, Oaks, and People: An Investment Strategy

[In early July Pacific Birds and Partners completed Prairie, Oaks, and People: An Investment Strategy and Business Plan.](#)

In the next five years, the plan calls for:

- ▶ \$102.1 million for protection, \$180 million for restoration, \$17.2 million to build community and capacity, and \$4.9 million for species recovery.
- ▶ Funding this investment will result in the protection of 10,200 acres, restoration of 60,000 acres, direct outreach and relationship building with thousands of landowners and community members, and the creation of at least 25 job opportunities for tribal and non-tribal partners.



Coastal Wetlands Strategic Plan

[The Strategic Plan for Coastal Wetlands was released in early May](#) following an intensive planning process that engaged agency and Tribal partners, researchers, and conservation practitioners from across the region.

Highlights of the plan include:

- ▶ Describes 5 broad conservation strategies and 44 associated actions
- ▶ Identifies 35 very high-priority species and 50 high-priority species.
- ▶ Includes 20 key knowledge gaps and research needs
- ▶ Addresses conservation in focal habitats including tidal wetlands, eelgrass meadows, freshwater wetlands, and bird-friendly working lands and waters.
- ▶ Spans the northern Pacific Flyway, including Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and Northern California.



A Strategic Plan for Hawai'i Wetlands

[The Strategic Plan for Hawai'i Wetlands was completed at the end of February](#) after 18 months of extensive consultation with diverse partners, site managers, and agencies.

Highlights of the plan include:

- ▶ Prioritizes wetland sites and conservation actions to improve habitats for waterbirds and communities.
- ▶ Elevates Indigenous priorities of biocultural restoration, as part of a holistic set of conservation actions.
- ▶ Site-specific conservation actions were identified for 75 individual wetland sites.
- ▶ Provides a road map for effective, collaborative wetland conservation work statewide.



National Grant Successes Lead to Major Conservation Achievements

Pacific Birds has supported partners in major grant applications and funding programs since its inception. This has led to the protection of key habitats hosting at-risk or endangered species, significant community sites, and more, helping improve climate and community resiliency across the Pacific. Learn more about two major granting programs and successful grants in our service area in the past year below.

Hanalei *lo'i kalo* (taro pondfield), Helen Raine

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Successes

This year, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) National Coastal Resilience Fund made a substantial investment of ~\$7.5 million, leveraged with matching partner funds totaling ~ \$5.5 million in Hawai'i. **Pacific Birds worked closely with two partners on their 2023 NFWF NCRF applications. Together, these two grants represent more than \$1.1 million in conservation investments on Kaua'i and Moloka'i. These successful grants were:**

The Moloka'i Land Trust: Planning for a Resilient Community and Thriving Waterbird Population in Moloka'i (HI)

Led by the Moloka'i Land Trust, with support from the Moloka'i Wetland Partnership this project is building on the Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Science Center (PI-CASC) wetland prioritization that was completed this year, a multi-partner initiative that identified suitable wetlands for restoration on Moloka'i. Grant funds are supporting a Wetland Coordinator for the island, bringing much-needed capacity to wetland restoration efforts. Activities include preparatory work for restoration design at two of the priority sites and a mangrove removal workshop to be held on O'ahu. Extensive outreach, engagement, and education work are being done to ensure the community's restoration vision is honored.



The team during field visits on Moloka'i, Butch Haase

Hanalei Watershed Hui: Completing Final Design for Floodplain Restoration and Waterbird Habitat Enhancement in Hanalei

From 2021-2023, a previous NFWF NCRF grant to the Hui supported the development of a Digital Elevation Model (DEM), a complete Iterative Hydrologic and Hydraulic Modeling for the Hanalei Basin. The resulting [Hanalei Watershed flood study](#) proposed different options to reduce flooding using nature-based solutions. A new grant, funded in 2024 will take those proposals to full design and permitting, including project cost estimates. Waterbird habitat enhancement will be an integral part of this work, such as detention basins that will alleviate flood impacts and provide much-needed waterbird habitat. Hau bush (*Hibiscus tilaceus*) removal has also been identified as a potential action to enhance the resiliency of the Hanalei Basin, protect the community, and benefit waterbird populations. This project reflects a true collaboration, bringing together partners from the Hanalei community, local landowners, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Pacific Birds, local non-profit organizations, and others. This funding and the resulting conservation work will go a long way in protecting critical waterbird habitats in Hawai'i while supporting community needs.

North American Wetland Conservation Act

The Department of the Interior awarded over \$87 million in funding for the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and North American Wetland Conservation Act grants this year, supporting habitat restoration and conservation for over 300,000 acres of wetland and upland migratory bird habitat across North America. Two of the accepted projects are within the Pacific Birds service area, representing a substantial investment of \$4.3 million leveraged with matching partner funds totaling ~\$7.7 million.

	\$ USD	Acres
US Small Grant	\$5,057,887	13,298
US Standard	\$54,323,849	189,767
Total	\$59,381,736	203,065

Table 1. Since 1991, NAWCA has funded over \$59 million in projects benefitting more than 200,000 acres within the Pacific Birds service area in the U.S.

	\$ CAD	Acres
Securement		142,069
Stewardship	\$297,019,882	6,671,576
Restoration		205,497

Table 2. Total contributions and accomplishments in Pacific Birds (Canada) between 1991-2024. NAWCA made significant contributions to this achievement.



Brant & Mount Dutton, Izembek Lagoon, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, Kristine Sowl, USFWS

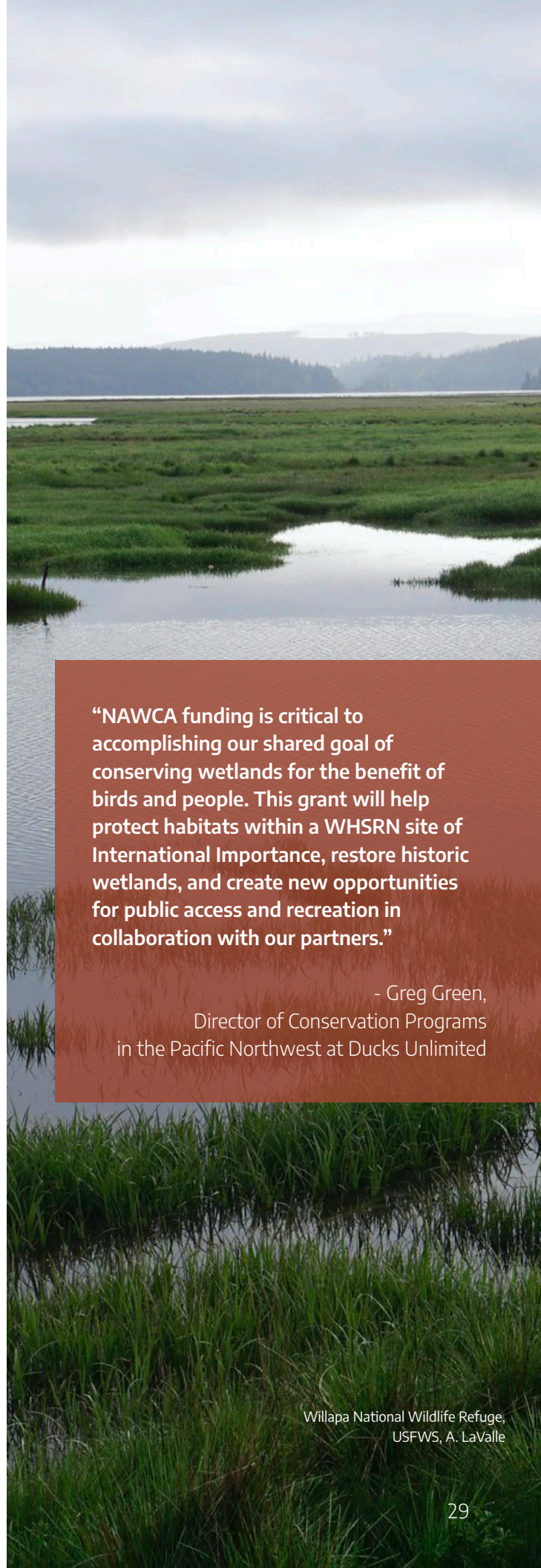


Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*) at Willapa Bay, USFWS Pacific Region, Jake Bonello

Willapa & Chehalis Wetlands

This [project](#) is a collaboration organized by Ducks Unlimited, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and regional partners to conserve priority wetlands and bird habitats in southwest Washington. It will conserve 1,672 acres of freshwater wetlands, estuarine tidelands, working agricultural lands, oak woodlands, and temperate rainforests. These habitats support waterfowl, shorebirds, and other water-dependent wildlife such as Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), Oregon Spotted Frog (*Rana pretiosa*), Green Sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*), and Pacific Salmon (*Oncorhynchus spp.*).

Wetlands and riparian areas throughout the Willapa and Chehalis basins feed into Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor, which provide habitat for hundreds of thriving species: shorebirds and other migratory birds, mammals, shellfish, finfish, and tiny phytoplankton, as well as threatened species like the Green Sturgeon. Willapa Bay and Long Beach Peninsula are designated a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) site of International Importance, and the Grays Harbor Estuary has a designation of Hemispheric Importance.



“NAWCA funding is critical to accomplishing our shared goal of conserving wetlands for the benefit of birds and people. This grant will help protect habitats within a WHSRN site of International Importance, restore historic wetlands, and create new opportunities for public access and recreation in collaboration with our partners.”

- Greg Green,
Director of Conservation Programs
in the Pacific Northwest at Ducks Unlimited

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge,
USFWS, A. LaValle

Upper Cook Inlet: Potter Marsh Watershed

This project will conserve, restore, and enhance 1,779.3 acres including 1,140.6 acres of wetlands that provide a critical migratory corridor and breeding habitat for wetland-associated birds in Southcentral Alaska. It focuses on threatened properties: the iconic Potter Marsh unit of Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), the Alaska Native corporation-managed Eklutna River Estuary, and the Mat-Su Borough Settlers Bay Coastal Park. The project also adds to landscape-scale connectivity between the 32,000-acre Refuge, 495,000-acre Chugach State Park, and 26,000-acre Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge.

The protected acquisition tracts supply 78% of the marsh's surface water via uplands, wetlands, and streams that direct groundwater from the Chugach Mountains to the Refuge. Around 220 bird species have been recorded in the Refuge, approximately 160 of which are migrants or breeders. Potter Marsh supports the highest density of breeding waterfowl within the Refuge, Anchorage Coastal Important Bird Area, and greater Anchorage area. During spring and fall migration, waterfowl are present in the thousands to rest and feed, including Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*), Tule Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*), Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*), and Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*).



Northern Pintail, USFWS

“This NAWCA grant brings in the final funds necessary for the Potter Marsh acquisition which we expect to complete this winter. We are thrilled to be conserving important habitat, trails, and a wildlife viewing destination in Alaska’s biggest city.”

- David Mitchell, Conservation Director
of the Great Land Trust

Building Capacity

Pacific Birds helps partners build capacity and leverage funds to strengthen conservation impact. Our work with the Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network is one example of how a multi-million-dollar partnership grew from a small investment, through continued collaboration. The Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network (KSON) is a collaborative regional partnership working to conserve oak habitats on private and public lands in southern Oregon and northern California.

Pacific Birds Nurtures Partnership Capacity

In 2020, Pacific Birds invested 17,500 into KSON to support partnership coordination and capacity building.

Partnership Leverages This Foundation

That capacity investment was leveraged to help secure \$110,000 of investment into strategic planning later that year.

Upper Rogue Oak Initiative Launches

As a result of these investments and with continued support from Pacific Birds, in 2022, KSON launched the Upper Rogue Oak Initiative.

The partnership was awarded \$7M from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board with \$3M secured match, followed by \$2.78M through the America the Beautiful Challenge grant to restore over 3000 acres of oak habitat restoration in the Upper Rogue watershed.

\$20M Secured to Restore ~10,000 Acres of Oak Habitat

By 2024, these capacity and on-the-ground investments helped build a foundation that resulted in securing a total of \$20,000,000 to restore close to 10,000 acres of oak habitat.



William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, George Gentry, Fish and Wildlife Service

Partnership Grants

Since beginning our [Partnership Grants program four years ago](#), project topics have ranged widely – supporting land acquisition, strategic planning, conferences, outreach, wildlife rehabilitation, and wetland restoration – just to name a few! All projects have one thing in common - they are helping to catalyze conservation and support the conservation priorities of the Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture. Grantees have included Indigenous groups and Tribal Nations, nonprofit organizations, land trusts & more.

The grantees and projects this year are:

- ▶ Cultivating cultural burning practices in Willamette Valley oak-prairie landscapes, *Long Tom Watershed Council*
- ▶ Supporting Salish Sea Estuary Bird Monitoring & Pacific Flyway Partnerships, *Ecostudies Institute*
- ▶ Conservation Assessment for Dabob Bay Natural Area, *Northwest Watershed Institute*
- ▶ Kachemak Heritage Land Trust and First Alaskans Institute Collaborative Partnership and Conservation Project, *Kachemak Heritage Land Trust*
- ▶ Protecting Alaska’s Priority Coastal Wetlands to Sustain Resilient Coastal Communities, *National Audubon Society*
- ▶ Lokowaka Pond Wetland Restoration, *‘Āina Ho‘ōla Initiative*
- ▶ Wetland Warriors of the Pacific, *Learning Endeavors*
- ▶ Keawāwa Wetland Enhancement for the Endangered ‘Alae ‘Ula and Ae‘o, *Livable Hawai‘i Kai Hui*

This year, we are excited about new collaborations, including a project with Learning Endeavors, who are developing an online and in the field course incorporating Hawaiian wetland ecology, bird conservation, community science, and cultural perspectives. And we continue to grow relationships, including with the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust in support of incorporating Indigenous stewardship practices into the land trust’s conservation toolbox. Full project summaries can be found on our [Partnership Grants page](#).

\$615K
awarded

\$2M+
partner
match funds
leveraged

423
organizations
engaged

10
positions
supported



Lokowaka Pond, one of the new Partnership Grant sites, Helen Raine

“Lomakatsi is grateful for Pacific Birds’ sponsorship of the 2023 Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Peer-to-Peer Learning Summit, which provided stipends and covered travel expenses for tribal elders and tribal presenters—including youth. Their support helped make this historic event a success, bringing together 300 tribal, agency, NGO, academic, and industry leaders to elevate tribal partnerships in collaborative forest and watershed restoration across Oregon.”

- Belinda Brown, Tribal Partnerships Director,
Kosealekte Band of the Ajumawi-Atsuge Nation
(federally recognized as the Pit River Tribe)



“Many of the intertwined objectives of this project focused on the need to incorporate Indigenous land return, Indigenous land stewardship, and traditional ecological knowledge into the conservation work we accomplish in our partnerships, and we appreciate Pacific Birds’ recognition of this need and support of these kinds of partnerships.”

- Suzie Fortner, Executive Director, Friends of the Dunes

“At Oregon Agricultural Trust we know that there are enormous opportunities for native habitat conservation on farms and ranches. This fact is woven into our purpose as an organization. The partnership between Oregon Agricultural Trust and Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture has helped OAT build new connections with landscapes and partners in new geographies.

Because of the partnership, we have new familiarity with the farms and ranchlands that contain habitat for many of Oregon’s species of greatest conservation need.”

- Ivor Kincaide,
Farmland Protection Program Director,
Oregon Agricultural Trust



Lokowaka Pond,
Helen Raine




PACIFIC BIRDS
HABITAT JOINT VENTURE

pacificbirds.org | info@pacificbirds.org

**Thank you to our
conservation partners.**

