

About DoD Partners in Flight

Bird Conservation Programs in the Military



Mission

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

What is DoD Partners in Flight?

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Partners in Flight (PIF) program consists of a cooperative network of natural resources personnel and others that spans across U.S. military installations, and links with partners throughout the Americas.

DoD PIF supports and enhances the military mission by providing a focused and coordinated approach for the conservation of resident and migratory birds and their habitats on DoD lands dealing with all bird species, including migratory, resident, game, and non-game birds.

Specifically, DoD PIF develops cooperative agreements for implementing bird conservation programs and projects on military lands, facilitates communication and information sharing across geographic and political boundaries, participates and provides leadership in PIF committees and working groups, and provides military natural resources professionals with the most up-to-date information on bird conservation.

Who is DoD PIF?

A full-time Program Coordinator and approximately 25 natural resources managers from military installations and commands around the country comprise DoD PIF. This network represents each Military Service, as well as the civil works branch of the Army Corps of Engineers.

Working Groups

DoD PIF maintains a working group structure similar to that of the national PIF initiative. This includes regional working groups (Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, and West) and topic-specific groups, including Research and Monitoring, Education and Outreach, International, Species of Concern, Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard, and Invasive Species.

Migratory Bird Conservation

Migratory birds are a diverse group, relying on a wide range of habitats during their breeding and non-breeding seasons, as well as during migration. Effective bird conservation necessitates coordinated efforts that both improve habitats and contribute to the overall health of ecosystems. Given the vast geographic ranges of migratory birds, the variety of species, and the incomplete knowledge of their life cycle requirements, conservation partnerships spanning geopolitical and taxonomic boundaries are critical to the success of migratory bird conservation efforts.

Bird Habitat on DoD Lands

DoD manages approximately 28 million acres of land, water, and air resources across hundreds of installations; the Army Corps of Engineers manages an additional 12 million acres. These lands represent a critical network of habitats for birds, offering migratory stopover sites for resting and feeding, as well as suitable sites for nesting and rearing their young. The many installations that provide these important habitats form DoD's *Steppingstones of Migration*. DoD PIF is committed to ensuring that these areas, along with the species that depend on them, are protected and sustained for future generations.



*Adult Burrowing Owl on its breeding grounds at Kirtland Air Force Base, NM.
Photo: Kirsten Cruz-McDonnell*

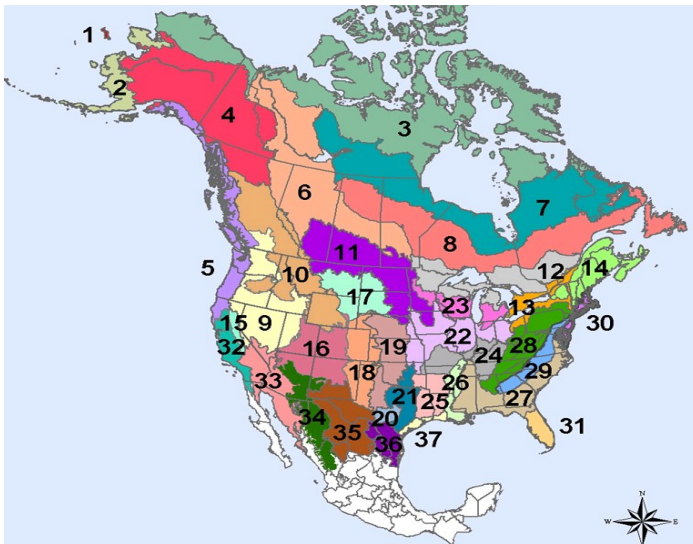
How Bird Conservation Advances the Mission

Military mission training requirements depend on the availability of a wide variety of environments: our Military Service personnel need to train in the ecosystems in which they may fight. Therefore, it is important that DoD's lands are not degraded.

North America's bird species occupy a wide range of habitats and many are sensitive to environmental change. As a result, they can be excellent indicators of an area's biological diversity and the relative health of the associated ecosystems. Bird conservation can help DoD to maintain its diverse ecosystems. In some cases, training activities may help maintain healthy, functioning ecosystems, such as grasslands dependent upon periodic fires, or benefit birds, such as those that require some light ground disturbance.

Almost 30% of North America's bird species are in "significant decline" and 1 in 8 of the world's birds (1,213 species total) face extinction.





This tool will provide a consolidated list of species of concern based on eight different priority lists:

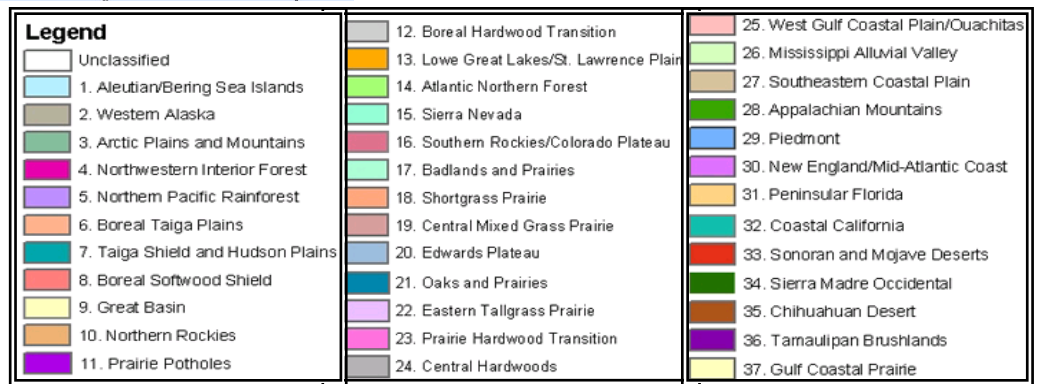
- Birds of Conservation Concern
- Partners in Flight
- North American Waterbird Conservation Plan
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan
- U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan
- Threatened and Endangered Species (50 CFR 17.11)
- Game Birds Below Desired Condition
- Non-migratory Bird Species of Concern

A clickable version of this map is available at <http://dodpif.org/resources/bcrmap.php>

How DoD PIF Benefits the Military Mission

DoD PIF sustains and enhances readiness through proactive, habitat-based conservation and management strategies that maintain healthy landscapes and training lands. DoD PIF works beyond installation boundaries to facilitate cooperative partnerships, determine the current status of migratory birds, and prevent the listing of additional birds as threatened or endangered.

DoD PIF provides a scientific basis for maximizing the effectiveness of resource management, enhancing the biological integrity of DoD lands, and ensuring continued use of these lands to fulfill military training requirements. Participating in partnerships, such as PIF, also helps DoD to more effectively meet its trust responsibility to conserve our nation's biodiversity.



History of Partners in Flight

The international Partners in Flight program (PIF) was initiated in 1990 in response to declining populations of migratory birds. The network comprises a cooperative partnership among federal, state and local government agencies, philanthropic foundations, professional organizations, conservation groups, industry, the academic community, and private individuals across the Americas. PIF focuses resources on improving monitoring and inventory, research, management, and education programs involving birds and their habitats. PIF's mission has three priorities: keeping common birds common, helping species at risk, and fostering voluntary partnerships that benefit birds, habitats, and people.

More than 300 partners have contributed their expertise and resources to help make PIF successful in its conservation efforts. DoD signed the Memorandum of Agreement to participate in PIF in 1991.

The Flight Plan

The *Flight Plan*, the original PIF blueprint for bird conservation planning, consists of four key elements that embody the essential elements of adaptive resource management. To facilitate the translation of continental population objectives into biologically sound, measurable regional and local population-based habitat targets, PIF adopted the *Five Elements Process*. This process shifts focus from identifying priority species to formulating quantitative estimates of how much habitat is needed, where and by when.

The *Flight Plan* and *Five Elements Process* offer a framework for incorporating bird habitat management efforts into DoD's Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMPs).

Contact: Richard A. Fischer, Ph.D.
 DoD Partners in Flight Program Coordinator
 Richard.A.Fischer@usace.army.mil
 www.dodpif.org