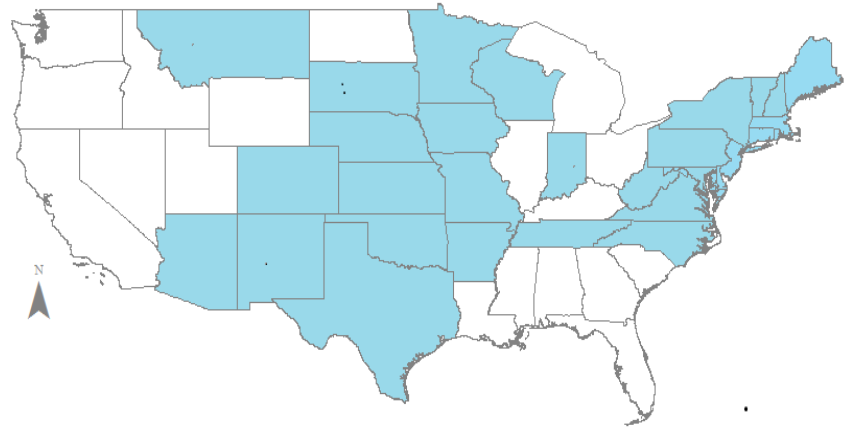




Strategic Investments for Priority Birds

Southern Wings facilitates partnerships between state fish and wildlife agencies and partners in Mexico, Central, South America and the Caribbean to successfully conserve shared migratory bird species throughout their annual lifecycle. Modeled after state involvement in Canada for waterfowl, Southern Wings sets the stage for international collaboration by bringing state fish and wildlife agencies together with colleagues beyond our national borders. Conservation efforts focused solely on U.S. breeding or stop over habitats cannot effectively conserve many neotropical migrants. For a modest investment in conservation of shared species in Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean, we can help keep state priority migratory birds off the Endangered Species Act.



PACIFIC FLYWAY COUNCIL (PFC)

ENDORSEMENT: PFC adopted a process to evaluate, endorse, and collaboratively fund (if they choose to participate) Southern Wings projects that reflect the priorities of the Pacific Flyway states. Through that process, the Council liaison submits to Council up to three projects from the SWP Technical Committee that the Nongame Technical Committee (NTC) and Study Committee (SC) deem appropriate for support from Pacific Flyway states. This year the PFC endorsed projects to conserve and restore habitat in Laguna Madre and the Northern Grasslands of Mexico and implement the Pacific Flyway Survey.

**30 States Participating
Over \$2.7 Million on the
ground for conservation**

WHY SOUTHERN WINGS?

Southern Wings:

- offers an easy, transparent, and flexible process for states to effectively conserve their migratory bird species of greatest conservation need when they are not in the U.S.;
- is a critical complement to in-state investment on migratory bird stop over and breeding habitats;
- leverages limited state funds and can provide non-federal match;
- identifies strategic, biologically relevant projects with high quality partners that provide the most bang for your conservation buck; and
- helps keep species off the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by addressing annual life cycle conservation needs.



CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION IN LAGUNA MADRE, MEXICO:

Laguna Madre, in northeastern Mexico in the state of Tamaulipas, is just south of the Texas border. A lagoon over 100 miles in length is formed by a barrier island. Large numbers of shorebirds and ducks winter in the lagoon and the barrier island. Species impacted that connect this project to Western states include Reddish Egret, Redheads, Long-billed Curlew, Piping Plover, and Red Knot. Conservation actions at Laguna Madre have been identified as a priority in the Rio Grande Joint Venture Implementation Plan. The state of Texas through Southern Wings has already successfully restored 62 acres of mangroves. Conservation and restoration actions continue to be a high priority. They include restoration of 370 acre wetland, restoration of mangroves to control erosion, and bird monitoring to evaluate actions and bird use.



IDENTIFYING THREATS AND CONSERVATION HOTSPOTS FOR SHOREBIRDS IN THE PACIFIC FLYWAY:

A network of coastal and interior wetlands stretching from southern Alaska to Chile host significant aggregations of shorebirds and are critical for their survival; including 12 Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network sites in NW Mexico. The Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey (PFSS) and the Migratory Shorebird Project (MSP), are filling gaps in Pacific Flyway species population status and trends, assess threats, and identify priority sites for conservation. The primary species recorded during the annual winter survey in Mexico include **Western Sandpiper, Dunlin, Marbled Godwit, Willet, Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, Greater Yellowlegs, Dowitcher spp., Snowy Plover, Black-necked Stilt and American Avocet**. Bird survey data will be combined with habitat maps to **identify conservation priority wintering sites for Pacific Flyway State Wildlife Action Plan focal species and develop shorebird friendly management and conservation strategies for important areas**. Surveys will also inform communication and outreach activities to local communities to raise environmental awareness about shorebird conservation.



GRASSLANDS CONSERVATION: Iowa, South Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma have supported Pronatura Noreste to successfully protect and restore native desert grasslands in Mexico’s El Tokio Grassland Priority Conservation Area. To date they have protected 49,381 acres of the Llano de Soledad grasslands and a almost 116,000 acres through acquisition or conservation agreements in El Tokio.

Some next steps include:

- ◆ continuing grasslands restoration on specific properties (i.e., erosion control fencing),
- ◆ developing grazing management plans. and
- ◆ continue monitoring of results.



New Mexico and Arizona helped implement grassland conservation in the Valles Centrales GPCA. The goals of the project are to:

- ◆ enroll 200,000 additional acres into the Sustainable Grazing Network in the Chihuahuan Desert of northern Mexico to reach the overall goal of 500,000 acres by 2020;
- ◆ secure 15 year collaborative management agreements with at least 6 additional ranchers to protect conservation investments; and
- ◆ double the carrying capacity of these habitats for species such as Sprague’s pipit and Baird’s Sparrow.

Seven to 28 Species of Greatest Conservation Need in each WAFWA state winter in the Chihuahuan Desert.

- Baird’s Sparrow**
- Chestnut-collared Longspur**
- Long-billed Curlew**
- Sprague’s Pipit**
- Savannah Sparrow**
- Horned Lark,**
- Grasshopper Sparrow**
- Ferruginous Hawk**
- Golden Eagle**



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ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WESTERN STATES:

1. Golden Eagle Conservation and Monitoring in Northwest Mexico
2. Monitoring western yellow-billed cuckoos (*coccyzus americanus*) in northern Mexico
3. Conservation of forest birds in western Mexico