

Partners in Flight

Helping Species at Risk | Keeping Common Birds Common
Voluntary Partnerships for Birds, Habitats, and People



Partners in Flight Steering Committee Action Brief North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference March 2021

Partners in Flight (PIF) is a broad collaboration among individuals and organizations working to meet landbird conservation needs at multiple scales including implementation of the 2016 Conservation Plan.



December 2020 marked our 30th anniversary. Many of our celebrations and strategic planning and visioning meetings in 2020 were delayed because of COVID isolation guidelines. In 2021, we'll continue our efforts to use the 30th anniversary as a platform to engage more people in bird conservation through our international network. Follow our web site (partnersinflight.org) for announcements.

Partners in Flight has launched a **visioning exercise to consider our role in bird conservation for the next 10 – 30 years**; we are building toward the future while examining our past success and challenges. In the coming year, we are planning open sessions for all partners to provide input on our future directions.

A “capacity gap” for bird conservation lies in our ability to move existing large landscape conservation planning (such as done by Joint Ventures), to on the ground multi-state projects. Partners in Flight is proposing two new positions for bird conservation, **Conservation Delivery Specialists**, for both the eastern and western United States. The proposal is being fleshed out by states in each nongame tech section of Flyways and other partners. We are seeking funding for these positions by the end of the year.

The Partners in Flight Science Team has been foundational to moving forward the **Road to Recovery (R2R) process**, which is a coordinated science approach to determining the specific limiting factors for individual bird species. We are working to link limiting factors research with multi-state landscape conservation efforts to recover the billions of birds lost. (<https://marralab.com/road-to-recovery/>)

Improving and streamlining our science communications has been a significant piece of our 30th anniversary – we strive to engage more people in bird conservation through application and update of decision support tools for improved integration into natural resource planning, conservation implementation, and education and training. The web site's Conservation Resource Library is increasingly user friendly and the news blogs include stories of cutting-edge field work while others describe our rich history based science and applied conservation biology. (<https://partnersinflight.org/blog/>)

Starting in 2021, the **Partners in Flight Steering Committee will have Canadian and US co-chairs** for the first time. Furthermore, the Canadian Wildlife Service continues their commitment to supporting a full-time Canadian Partners in Flight Coordinator.

The **US Department of Defense Partners in Flight (DoD PIF)** program celebrates their 30th anniversary in 2021; the program marks among the strongest and longest sustained efforts among federal agencies. The entire Spring 2021 issue of *Natural Selections*, the DoD newsletter, is dedicated to DoD PIF and highlights many of the projects that help meet Partners in Flight objectives. The newsletter will be posted in early March at <https://www.denix.osd.mil/nr/resources/newsletter/index.html>

The US Fish and Wildlife Service's **Forest Ecology Working Group is hosting a 12-month webinar series focused on forest management and birds**, starting on March 16 and running for 12 months, every third Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m. eastern time. The National Conservation Training Center is developing a series of short videos to expand the information provided by the webinars. View the schedule and register through <https://doilearn2.webex.com/doilearn2/onstage/g.php?PRID=0f3ab43a69b76892344243548e38ee5e>

Partners in Flight was engaged in the development and recent release of the **US Geological Survey's update of the Breeding Bird Survey Strategic Plan 2020-30**. <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/cir1466>

In 2021, **World Migratory Bird Day** will “Sing, Fly, Soar - Like a Bird!” through a conservation theme that invites people to take off, **learn about migration** and how we can help to protect birds. The theme will be highlighted by our partners and will serve as a spring launch to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's campaign to engage people at some of the most important stopover and breeding sites in North America. The 2021 art features 11 species and will be adapted for use around the world.



The Partners in Flight **Western Working Group (WWG)** is focused on western forest conservation on both public and private land. Key strategies include integration of forest habitats into western Joint Venture implementation plans and identification of ecosystem services that healthy forests provide. Examples of the latter from Canada and Mexico will be addressed in their April meetings. https://partnersinflight.org/working_groups/western/



Partners in Flight's new **Eastern Working Group (EWG)** is coalescing quickly around its major priority areas of science delivery, data management, and full annual cycle conservation. The group received a Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act award to expand partnership work in the nonbreeding priority focus areas and to incorporate full annual cycle conservation, data management and dissemination, and development of science-based tools. A meeting of the full EWG is planned for October 2021. https://partnersinflight.org/working_groups/eastern/

The **US Forest Service and Klamath Bird Observatory** are working in collaboration to move years of point count data from many National Forests in the southeast into the **Avian Knowledge Network (AKN)**. The expanse of the data is among the largest ever downloaded to AKN and will provide valuable insight into bird – habitat relationships across the region.

The **Desert Thrasher Working Group**, revitalized in response to the PIF 2016 plan update, will conduct a range-wide multi-state (AZ, CA, NM, NV, UT, and Sonora MX) survey in 2021, thanks to financial support primarily from the BLM. States' wildlife agencies and NGOs are now working with Mexican partners, Department of Defense, and the National Park Service to increase the scope of the survey. A final report summarizing the first 2 years of multi-state surveys and other information can be found on the Sonoran JV's Borderland Avian Data Center <https://data.pointblue.org/partners/borderlands/>

Voluntary and incentive-based **conservation on private lands** is a primary focus of Partners in Flight conservation delivery. The **US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife program** and the **Natural Resources Conservation Service** remain key partners in delivering bird conservation objectives. We have also increased our engagement with the National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) to assist their efforts to integrate at-risk species into lands planning and management.

Grassland bird conservation remains a major focus. PIF is engaged with the Central and Mississippi grassland Roadmap efforts, which are especially instrumental in the development of science needs and implementation of habitat conservation strategies across birds' full annual cycle.

<https://www.grasslandsroadmap.org/> (Central grasslands) and

<https://www.msflywaygrasslandssummit.com/> (Mississippi Flyway)

Partners in Flight remains an active voice for bird conservation in the conservation community and beyond. Join us!

- a. PIF is instrumental in developing peer-reviewed publications and hosts major symposia at scientific conferences.
- b. The PIF website (partnersinflight.org) provides conservation resources, news, and access to conservation tools for land managers, biologists, citizen scientists, educators, community organizers and others.
- c. The PIF Facebook page provides opportunities for partners to interact and share stories for bird conservation.

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