

Northern Pacific Rainforest Bird Conservation Region (BCR 5) Pacific Coast Joint Venture

BCR Description and Priorities

The Northern Pacific Rainforest Bird Conservation Region (BCR 5) is nearly identical to the area encompassed by the Pacific Coast Joint Venture (Joint Venture), excluding Hawaii and western Alaska. The BCR is a relatively narrow 150-mile wide strip of temperate rainforest that stretches from the western Gulf of Alaska south through western British Columbia, Oregon, Washington, and northwestern California. Elevation ranges from sea level to 14,411 feet, with over 2,000 off-shore islands and over 40,000 miles of shoreline. The dominant habitats are estuarine, wetland, riparian, prairie-oak, and conifer forests.

Bird conservation issues and opportunities in upland habitats are quite varied. The remaining vast areas of forest wilderness may represent our best strongholds for stable populations of some forest bird species. However, intensive management throughout much of the coniferous forest has adversely impacted populations of many bird species. Not far from some of these remote forest areas, sprawling cities such as Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver support an expanding human population that extends tentacles of development

throughout the region. In particular, riparian and prairie-oak habitats, the uplands most desirable for human development, have experienced drastic changes and significant negative bird population impacts. Priority species in these habitats include Acorn Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Bullock's Oriole, and Swainson's Thrush.

Conservation Design Approach

The Approach. Biologists take various approaches to conservation design depending upon the upland habitat type of interest. In coniferous forests, for example, biologists are directing their efforts primarily toward forest management and designing landscapes that provide forest habitat conditions and special features to support priority bird species. In lowland prairie-oak habitats, on the other hand, biologists are identifying remaining high quality sites for protection, along with areas where invasive species habitat degradation needs to be managed. In lowland riparian habitats, identifying high quality sites for protection is also important. In addition, recreating historic conditions of wider riparian zones is critical in many areas for several priority bird species.



**The Northern Pacific Rainforest
BCR 5**

Conservation Design

The Tools. Biologists are using a variety of conservation design tools, including geospatial layers for multiple habitats, land ownership, and future land use projections. The geospatial habitat layers include broad-scale, relatively coarse resolution layers, such as GAP, as well as small scale, relatively finer resolution layers that are habitat or jurisdiction-specific, such as oak habitats in the Puget Trough and Metro (i.e., local government) habitats in Portland. Biologists are also developing bird species-habitat databases which provide essential information on parameters, such as bird density estimates, by habitat type, elevation thresholds, and patch size requirements.

The Benefits. The BCR 5 approach to conservation design emphasizes the need for quantitative objectives for both habitats and bird populations. We are setting objectives that are being used at scales ranging from local wildlife management areas or refuges to the entire BCR. Our quantitative objective-setting efforts directly support the State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP) as the next stage of bird conservation. These plans provided a strong conservation foundation on issues, priorities, and general conservation actions to be taken, but they do not provide measurable targets for species and habitats. Our conservation design efforts are filling this gap and, moreover, are engaging state partners, through the Joint Venture, to ensure compatibility with the SWAP.

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