Tools Available to Conserve Birds in NM

Peggy Darr
Santa Fe County
NM Avian Conservation Partners Steering Committee Chair
Bird Conservation Tools: IUCN Red List

- Global in scale
- Species most in danger of extinction worldwide
- High priority bird species in NM that are also on the IUCN Red List (listed as vulnerable):
  - Bendire’s Thrasher
  - Lesser Prairie-Chicken
  - Pinyon Jay
  - Chestnut-collared Longspur

- Examples of other species listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List:
  - African Lion
  - Giraffe
  - Indian Rhinoceros
Bird Conservation Tools: National Bird Conservation Plans

nabci

Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

North American Waterfowl Management Plan 2012

The U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership
Building Collaborative Action for Shorebird Conservation
Bird Conservation Tools: Partners in Flight Landbird Conservation Plan

- Watch List of species in greatest need of conservation attention in the U.S. and Canada
- Population goals and objectives for Watch List species
- List of common birds in steep decline
- Global population estimates and percent population change for all landbird species in U.S. and Canada
New Mexico Avian Conservation Partners (State chapter of Partners in Flight)
Bird Conservation Tools: NM Bird Conservation Plan

- Habitat Types and Descriptions
- Species Accounts
- Species Assessments and Conservation Lists
Bird Conservation Tools: NM Bird Conservation Plan

• **Species conservation lists:**
  - Species with high scores for which NM has a high stewardship responsibility; level 1 species are of higher concern than level 2 species

• **Biodiversity conservation lists:**
  - Species with high threats for which NM does not have a high stewardship responsibility, but that are important for the state's biodiversity; level 1 species are of higher concern than level 2 species

• Subspecies conservation list

Image: Justyn Stahl  
Image: Rick and Nora Bowers  
Image: Brian E. Small
Understanding the NM Species Assessments

• How can the scores be accurate if birds many of us see regularly in our backyards, like the Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay and Juniper Titmouse, are on the level one priority list, while a bird many of see less often, the Gray Vireo, is on the level two priority list?
Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay Population Trends

According to the Breeding Bird Survey

- **Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay:**
  - At the time of scoring, population had declined in NM by 3.17% per year since the 1960s
  - NM is home to approximately 18% of the global population

- **Juniper Titmouse:**
  - At the time of scoring, population had declined in NM by 1.36% per year since the 1960s
  - NM is home to approximately 41.8% of the global population
• **Gray Vireo:**
  - Population is currently not declining in NM, or rangewide
  - Threats considered lower than other piñon-juniper birds
  - Still of conservation concern (level 2) because:
    - NM is home to approximately 15.3% of the global population
    - Global range is very small
What Can We Learn from the Assessment Scores in NM?

Habitat Associations for Species with Scores ≥ 19
- Piñon-Juniper Woodland: 4
- Alpine/Tundra: 2
- Ponderosa Pine Forest: 2
- Chihuahuan Desert Grassland: 1
- Chihuahuan Desert Shrub: 1
- Great Basin Desert Shrub: 1
- Madrean Pine-Oak Woodland: 1
- Mixed-Conifer Forest: 1
- Montane Shrub: 1
- Plains and Mesa Grassland: 1
- Plains-Mesa Sand Shrub: 1

• Piñon-juniper habitats contain more of the highest scoring species (species scoring ≥ 19) than any other habitat type

• We need to focus more conservation attention on piñon-juniper woodlands
What Can We Learn from the Assessment Scores in NM?

Habitat Associations for Level 1 Species
- Ponderosa Pine Forest: 7
- Piñon-Juniper Woodland: 5
- Mixed-Conifer Forest: 4
- Chihuahuan Desert Grassland: 3
- Plains and Mesa Grassland: 3
- Alpine/Tundra: 2
- Chihuahuan Desert Shrub: 1
- Great Basin Desert Shrub: 1
- Madrean Pine-Oak Woodland: 1
- Middle Elevation Riparian: 1
- Montane Shrub: 1
- Montane Riparian: 1
- Plains-Mesa Sand Shrub: 1

Habitat Associations for Level 2 Species
- Piñon-Juniper Woodland: 20
- Ponderosa Pine Forest: 15
- Mixed-Conifer Forest: 14
- Madrean Pine-Oak Woodland: 13
- Chihuahuan Desert Shrub: 11
- Spruce-Fir Forest: 6
- Great Basin Desert Shrub: 5
- Plains and Mesa Grassland: 5
- Southwest Riparian: 4
- Chihuahuan Desert Grassland: 3
- Emergent Wetlands and Lakes: 3
- Plains-Mesa Sand Shrub: 3
- Montane Riparian: 2
- Montane Shrub: 2
- Cave/Rock/Cliff: 1
- Middle Elevation Riparian: 1
- Wet Meadow and Montane Grassland: 1

Our montane habitats need more conservation attention.
What Can We Learn from the Assessment Scores in NM?

• Even common, widespread montane species are showing significant declines in NM, further indicating these habitats are in poor condition and need more attention
What Can We Learn from the Assessment Scores in NM?

We need to continue grassland conservation in eastern NM, and increase conservation efforts in our Chihuahuan Desert grasslands.

Habitat Associations for Level 1 Species
Ponderosa Pine Forest: 7
Piñon-Juniper Woodland: 5
Mixed-Conifer Forest: 4
Chihuahuan Desert Grassland: 3
Plains and Mesa Grassland: 3
Alpine/Tundra: 2
Chihuahuan Desert Shrub: 1
Great Basin Desert Shrub: 1
Madrean Pine-Oak Woodland: 1
Middle Elevation Riparian: 1
Montane Shrub: 1
Montane Riparian: 1
Plains-Mesa Sand Shrub: 1
How do you know how to manage for these species?

- Attend NM Avian Conservation Partners statewide meetings
- Read the NM Avian Conservation Partners species accounts (they are currently being updated)
- Sign up for the NM Avian Conservation Partners Listserv!!!!
  - On this listserv we post new information regarding management of priority species
Other Bird Conservation Tools

NMACP Steering Committee:
Margaret (Peggy) Darr (Chair) - Santa Fe County
Corrie Borgman - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Martha Desmond - New Mexico State University
Erin Duvuvuei - New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Gail Garber - Hawks Aloft, Inc.
Jonathan Hayes - Audubon New Mexico
Kristine Johnson - Natural Heritage New Mexico
Kammie Kruse - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Marikay Ramsey - Bureau of Land Management
Christopher Rustay - Playa Lakes Joint Venture
Other Bird Conservation Tools

• NMACP Research Priorities List
• Lots more; see handout in packet!!!
What’s Next for NMACP?

• Update species accounts
• Finish conservation priority list for migratory species
• Implement standardized bird survey protocol in piñon-juniper habitat treatment areas statewide
• Host statewide meetings every 2-3 years
• Sign up for the NMACP listserv to receive updates