

Investing in Working Lands for Birds, Habitat and Rural America

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THE FARM BILL IS OUR COUNTRY'S LARGEST INVESTMENT

in voluntary working-lands conservation on private grasslands and forests. These investments help recover wildlife populations, improve soil health, protect clean water, and strengthen rural economies through cost-effective assistance to farmers and ranchers.

With nearly half of U.S. land in agricultural production, working-lands conservation is one of the best hopes for birds. Audubon partners and works with producers in ways that are cost-effective and scalable to improve habitat on ranches, farms, and managed forests. Together, we advance voluntary USDA programs that deliver real outcomes for birds, people, and working lands across the country.

STATE OF AMERICA'S BIRDS

Bird losses continue due to habitat loss and degradation. Grassland birds have plummeted by 43% in the last 50 years. Eastern forest breeding birds have lost more than a quarter of their populations since 1970, and over 50% of western forest birds are declining.

Several species that depend on private grasslands, like the Bobolink, and on forest management, like the Golden-winged Warbler, have lost over half of their entire populations.



Scale Conservation Forage by Modernizing the Conservation Reserve Program

Modernize the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to increase opportunity and incentive to convert marginal cropland into high-value forage and wildlife habitat, modeled after North Dakota's successful Conservation Forage Program.

- Flexible contracts that reduce risk for producers
- Continued working-lands use through managed grazing or haying benefits birds.
- Proven results for soil, water, and wildlife outcomes, especially for grassland birds

Additional Improvements to CRP

Support sustainable grazing models, increase the annual rental payment cap, and update rental rates to incentivize enrollment. This includes advancing the [CRP Improvement and Flexibility Act \(S. 2608 and H.R. 5111\)](#).

Secure robust funding and USDA capacity for proven conservation programs:

Maintain strong investments and on-the-ground technical staff in the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program



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(EQIP), Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Forest Landowner Support Program (FLSP), and Working Lands for Wildlife.

Improve conservation delivery in fields, forests, and rangelands by advancing strategic bills:

- [Increased Technical Service Provider Access Act \(H.R. 575 / S. 156\)](#)
- [Forest Conservation Easement Program \(H.R. 3476 / S. 1050\)](#)
- [Pacific Flyway Enhancement Act \(H.R. 1420\)](#)



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