BREAKING NEW GROUND:

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT TRENDS

IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Audubon



Authors

Science Division, NAS: Benjamin Haywood, Tim Meehan, Brooke Bateman, Richard Johnston, Cooper Farr, Chad Wilsey.

Latin America and Caribbean Division, NAS: Jorge Velasquez.

Report Design
Diego Cobos – Cobos Studio

Special Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the many CBC volunteers who made this report possible, as well as Poly Martinez, Melanie Ryan, Lucia Vazquez, Camilla Cerea, and Mateo Gonima Blanco for their creative support.

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1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than a century of bird counts.

85,000+
Observers

2,700+
Count circles

21
Countries

182
Count circles in Latin America and the Caribbean

300+
Local organizing partners

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) stands as one of the longest-running community science projects in the world.

Since 1900, tens of thousands of volunteers have ventured out annually to count birds and contribute to an irreplaceable hemispheric dataset. The most recent count (126th) engaged more than 85,000 observers across 2,701 circles in 21 countries—including 182 circles in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although counts began in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1972, over half of all newly-established circles in recent years have been in this area, reflecting a deepening commitment to understanding birds as vital indicators of environmental health across the Americas.

For the first time in the CBC's storied history, Audubon has modeled population trends for 44 bird species in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This milestone analysis transforms a decade of standardized data from hundreds of count circles into clear signals about how bird populations are changing across the hemisphere.

The results reveal a complex picture: a few species show encouraging increases—**Black-crowned Night Herons** and **Neotropic Cormorants** are thriving, while **Great Kiskadees** and **Squirrel Cuckoos** appear to remain stable across diverse landscapes.

Other trends raise urgent conservation questions across Latin America: **Blue-black Grassquits** are declining in agricultural areas and **Black Phoebes** are disappearing from freshwater habitats despite stability in the U.S. and Canada, while iconic raptors like **American Kestrels** show hemispheric declines.

These birds are telling us where ecosystems are under pressure and where conservation efforts may be working—providing the evidence needed to target protection, restoration, and management where it matters most.

Birds reveal where ecosystems are under pressure—and where conservation is working.

This publication offers both regional perspectives for Latin America and the Caribbean and a broader hemispheric picture for species whose ranges span the Americas, revealing patterns imperceptible through single-region analysis. **As CBC participation continues to expand across the Latin America and Caribbean region—supported by more than 300 local organizing partner organizations and thousands of dedicated volunteers—**the future holds even greater promise that will only deepen our understanding of how birds and ecosystems are responding to environmental change. The science that drives conservation across the Americas begins with counting, and every observer contributes to this essential work.

Explore the trends
Discover what the data reveal about birds.

Join the count
Find a circle near you or start a new one.

Protect birds
Your observations support conservation.

2

A HEMISPHERIC TRENDS

TRADITION TAKES FLIGHT



The Christmas Bird Count began in 1900 when ornithologist Frank Chapman proposed a new holiday tradition—counting birds rather than hunting them. What started as a conservation-minded alternative to competitive "side hunts" has evolved into one of the Western Hemisphere's longest-running wildlife censuses, engaging tens of thousands of volunteers annually and creating an unmatched dataset for tracking bird population trends. The CBC's power lies in its standardized methodology: consistent 15-mile/24-km diameter count circles, fixed dates (December 14–January 5), and structured effort reporting create a controlled scientific framework that enables researchers to distinguish real population changes from variations in observer effort. With over 125 years of data from the same locations using comparable methods, the CBC provides temporal depth unmatched by any other monitoring program—a historical baseline essential for understanding what we're losing, what we're saving, and what actions matter most.

Birds serve as powerful indicators of environmental health. When bird populations shift, they signal changes in habitat quality, climate patterns, food availability, or ecosystem function. The CBC captures these signals across entire landscapes, from urban neighborhoods to remote wilderness, creating comprehensive snapshots of bird communities that reveal how our shared environment is changing. Over 300 peer-reviewed scientific publications have used CBC data to detect population declines, document range shifts driven by climate change, understand irruption patterns, and guide conservation interventions—demonstrating how community scientists contribute genuine scientific value while building lasting connections between people and place.

During the 73rd count (1972–1973), participation expanded south of the United States with circles established in Belize, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. What started as a handful of pioneering efforts has blossomed into a vibrant network: the most recent count (126th) included 182 circles across Latin America, the Caribbean, and Pacific Islands, with 4,513 dedicated observers taking to the field and their feeders. Over half of all newly-established circles in recent years have been outside the U.S. and Canada, reflecting extraordinary growth in participation and a deepening commitment to bird conservation across the hemisphere. This expansion has been made possible by more than 300 local organizing partners throughout the region and the passion of countless individuals who recognize that the birds they count today tell the story of the landscapes we will share tomorrow.

Among these circles, some have been counting for decades, building the long-term datasets that make trend analysis possible. The Rio Upano (ECRU) circle in Morona Santiago, Ecuador and the San Blas (MXSB) circle in Nayarit, Mexico (pgs. 12-13) stand as testaments to sustained dedication—year after year, observers return to the same locations, using the same methods, creatin the continuity that transforms individual counts into powerful conservation science. These trends are only available because of their commitment and the contributions of every person who has participated in the CBC across Latin America and the Caribbean. The trends you'll explore in these pages exist because of these dedicated individuals.



Building the Foundation: Long-Term Counts That Make Trends Possible



From Visitors to Neighbors: Building a Birding Community—San Blas (MXSB)

Compiler: Mark Stackhouse

The San Blas Christmas Bird Count in Nayarit, Mexico, is one of Latin America's pioneering CBC circles, with origins in the early 1970s when the area was emerging as a premier birding destination. Early counts were conducted primarily by birding tourists from North America, but over the decades the count has evolved into an effort increasingly sustained by local birders and professional guides. This transition from visitor-led to community-rooted represents a critical milestone—the count now benefits from both the fresh perspectives of visiting birders and the intimate, year-round knowledge of local participants.

The region faces mounting conservation challenges as habitat loss from agricultural expansion, aquaculture, and urban development encroaches on important bird habitat. Recent progress in establishing protected areas offers hope, but continued advocacy and monitoring remain essential. CBC data that demonstrate the ecological significance of these areas and trends among species of concern become increasingly valuable as these landscape changes accelerate.

The future of the San Blas CBC depends on the synergy between visiting birding tourists and home-grown local guides. Birding tourism supports the local economy while creating mentorship opportunities for young birders, demonstrating that protecting habitat benefits both birds and people. This partnership ensures the count—and the conservation it supports—will continue for generations to come.



How One Christmas Bird Count Helped Change a Province—Río Upano (ECRU)

Compiler: RhoAnn Wallace

In 2007, when RhoAnn Wallace and Galo Real asked for a bird list at Sangay National Park in Ecuador's Morona Santiago province, they received a shocking answer: "There aren't any birds worth looking at here." The passionate naturalists knew better—and they knew that *it is easy to destroy what you do not know exists*. In 2008, they moved their family to Macas and founded Real Nature Travel Company as a conservation tool. But there was one problem: no birding community existed. So they built one.

In 2009, they organized the first Río Upano Christmas Bird Count. By afternoon, only their family had registered. RhoAnn called neighbors: "I've ordered pizza and beer—come count birds at our feeders." They came. That first count recorded 51 species.

Over the following years, the community grew. By 2014, over 50 participants documented 310 species. The family helped establish six additional CBC circles across the province—now Ecuador's largest concentration of active counts.

Today, birding is woven into life in Morona Santiago. CBC and eBird data have transformed the province: landowners who once considered logging now protect forests, recognizing that their greatest resource lives in the canopy above. Conservation begins with knowledge, grows through community, and succeeds because ordinary people choose to care.

3

CBC SPECIES TRENDS

KEY PATTERNS & STORIES



This analysis reveals 44 bird species with detectable trends across Latin America and the Caribbean, painting a complex picture of environmental change.

40% show declines

40% remain unclear

20% show increases

This chapter explores two perspectives

1. **Regional Trends**
   Species with significant population changes occurring primarily within Latin America and the Caribbean.

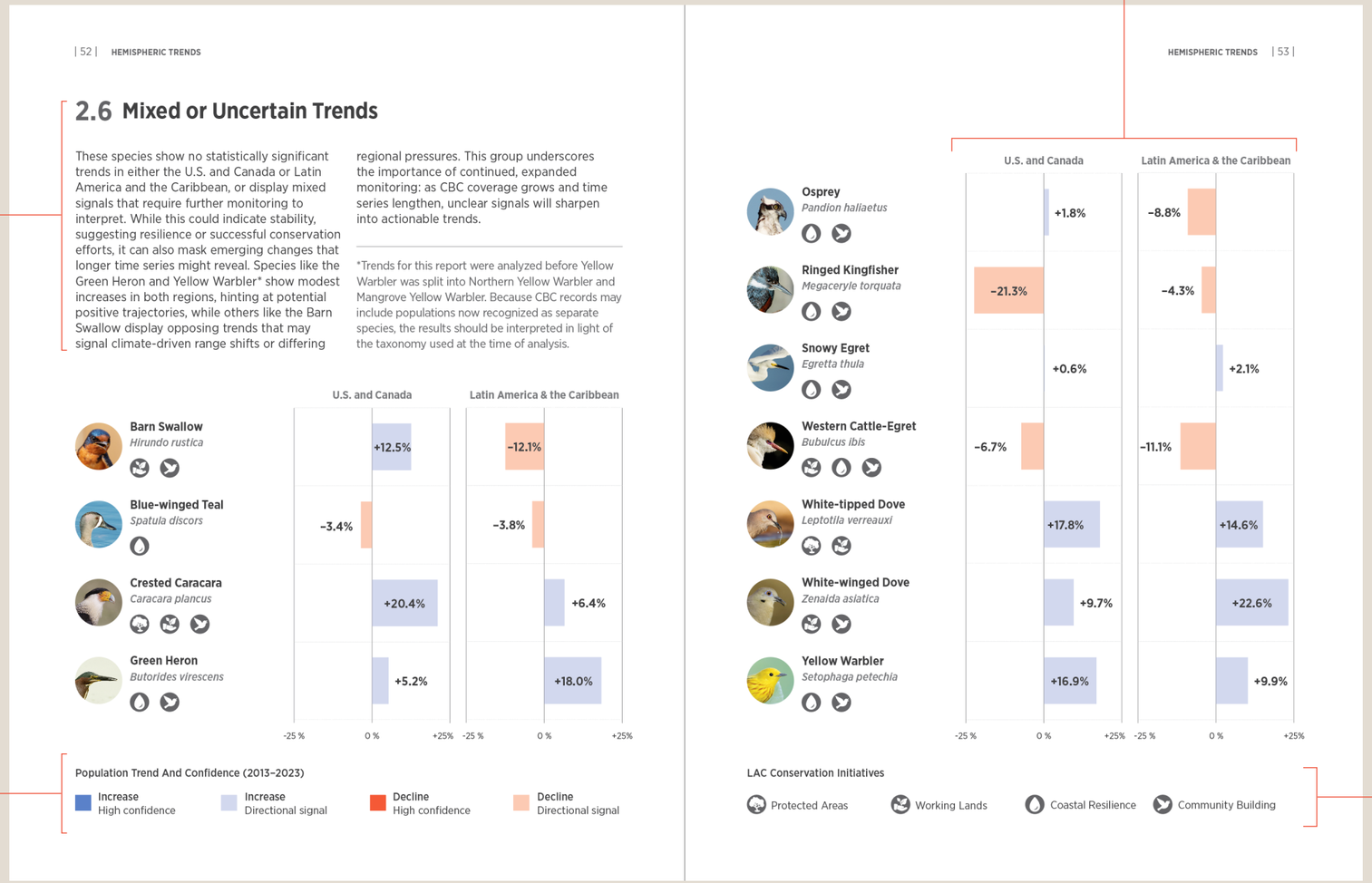
2. **Hemispheric Trends**
   Cross-regional patterns made visible by this dataset, including declines, increases, and opposing trends across the Americas.

HOW TO INTERPRET TREND INFORMATION

Trend group overview.
A brief introduction explaining why these species are grouped together and what their shared population trends reveal.

Trend Confidence.
Trends with a 90% probability or greater of reflecting a true increase or decrease are shown as high confidence. Other trends indicate directional signals but should be interpreted with greater caution.

- **Increase** High confidence
- **Increase** Directional signal
- **Decline** High confidence
- **Decline** Directional signal



Bar Charts.
Show the overall percent population change for each species from 2013-2023. Red indicates declines and blue indicates increases.

Conservation Initiative Tags.
Each species is linked to one or more of Audubon's four conservation intiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Protected Areas:
Species associated with forests, wetlands, and other protected natural habitats.

Working Lands:
Species associated with agricultural and managed landscapes.

Coastal Resilience:
Species dependent on coastal, estuarine, and wetland habitats.

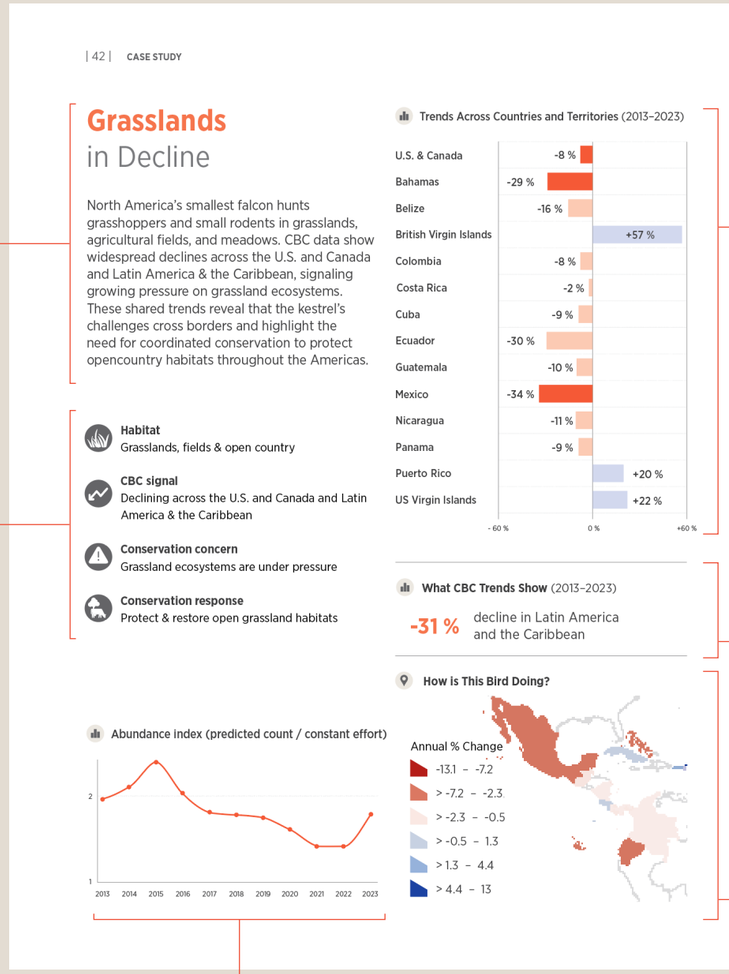
Community Building:
Species that help connect people with bird conservation.

HOW TO READ A CASE STUDY

Species story.
A brief overview introducing the species, its ecology, and what CBC data reveal about its population trend.

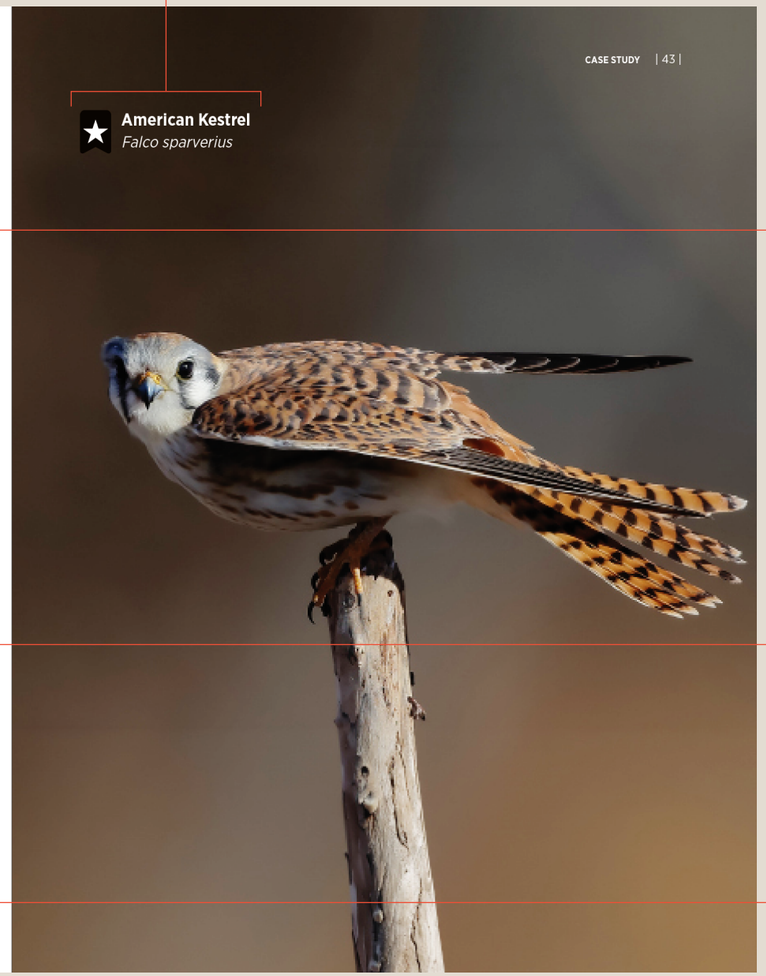
Callouts.
Quick-reference facts that summarize habitat, ecological role, CBC signal, conservation concern, and conservation response.

- Habitat
- CBC signal
- Conservation concern
- Conservation response



Abundance Index Graphs. Display year-to-year patterns in relative bird counts (more detail in chapter 6). While not a measure of absolute population size, these indices reveal trends over time—upward slopes suggest growing populations, downward slopes indicate declines, and flat lines may indicate stability.

Species name.
Common and scientific



Species photograph.

Bar Charts.
Show the overall percent population change for each species reported from 2013-2023 by country, with red indicating declines and blue showing increases. These provide an at-a-glance summary of whether populations are growing or shrinking over the decade. Data is only provided for countries where sufficient data exist to reliably calculate trends for a specific species.

Overall trend.
Overall percent population change in Latin America and the Caribbean from 2013-2023.

Annual Percent Change Maps.
Illustrate geographic variation in trends, showing the average annual percent change for each country where data were sufficient to calculate trends. These maps reveal whether species are faring differently across their range, highlighting regional conservation priorities.

3.1

REGIONAL TRENDS

Understanding
region-specific change across
Latin America and the Caribbean.



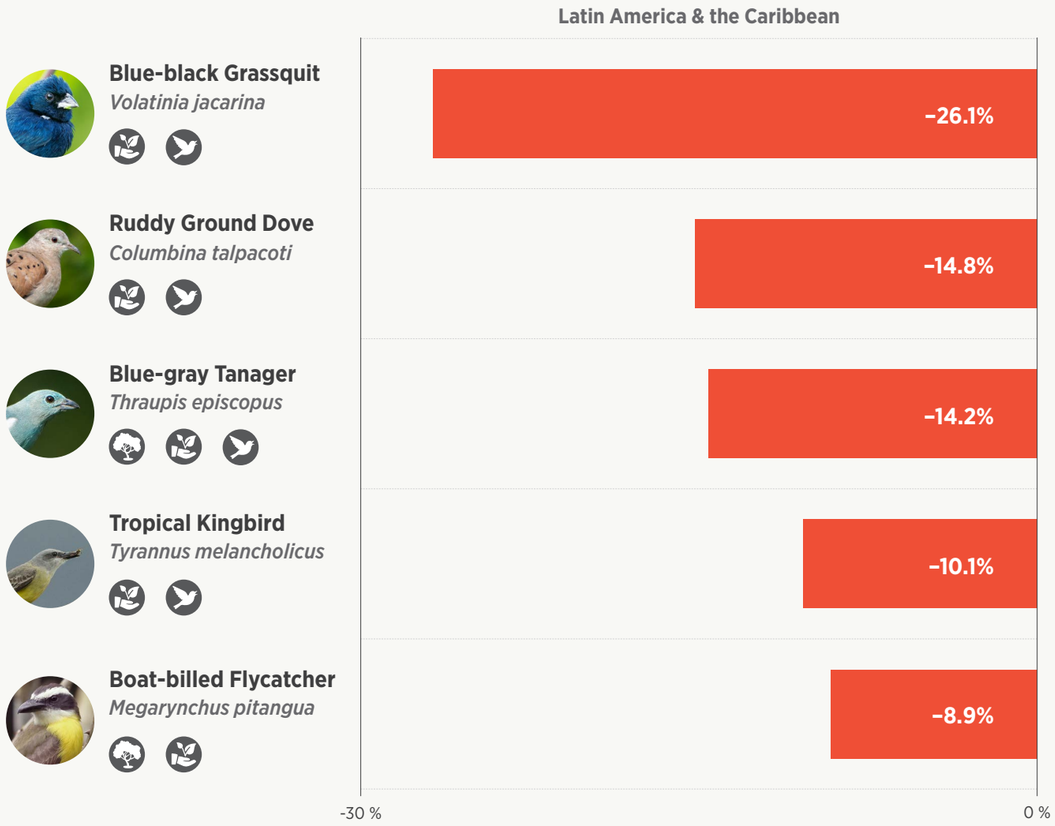
This section explores two recurring patterns observed within Latin America & the Caribbean.

1.1 Regional Declines in Latin America and the Caribbean

1.2 Mixed Regional Patterns

1.1 Regional Declines in Latin America and the Caribbean

Resident species with negative trends in Latin America and the Caribbean may be responding to local land-use changes, global pressures, or region-specific threats. These trends provide critical guidance for targeted action and highlight the unique conservation context of the region.

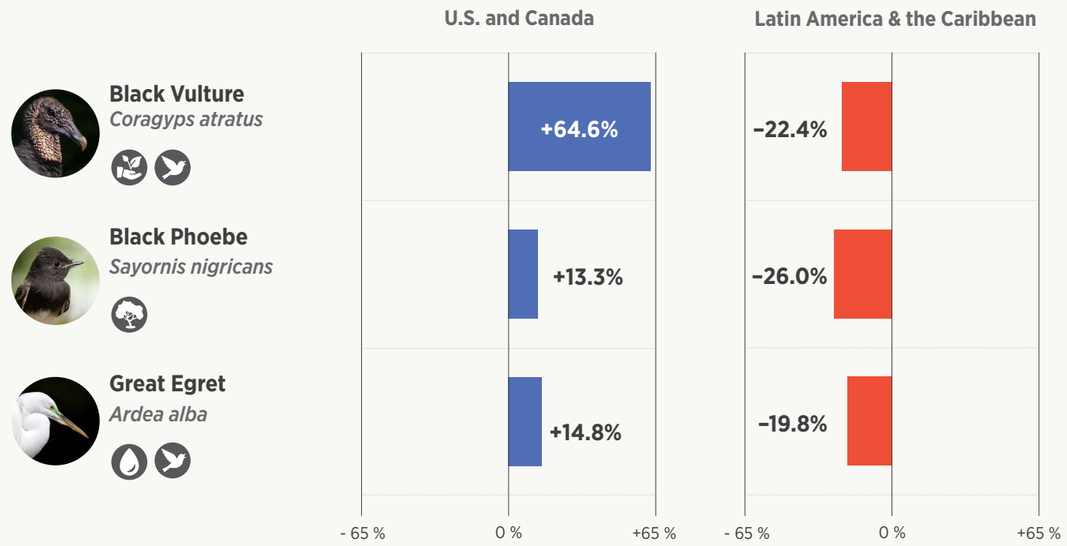


Population Trend And Confidence (2013–2023)

- **Increase** High confidence
- **Increase** Directional signal
- **Decline** High confidence
- **Decline** Directional signal

1.1.1 Regional Declines, Northern Increases

Three resident species showing declines in Latin America and the Caribbean have ranges across the hemisphere, and show mixed signals in these two areas, with increases in the U.S. and Canada. These opposing trends suggest region-specific pressures rather than hemisphere-wide threats.



LAC Conservation Initiatives

- Protected Areas
- Working Lands
- Coastal Resilience
- Community Building



Blue-black Grassquit
Volatinia jacarina

Declining in Working Lands

This small seed-eating finch thrives in grasslands and agricultural areas, making it an important indicator of working lands health. Despite its adaptability to human-modified landscapes, CBC data reveal concerning declines across Latin America and the Caribbean. The grassquit's decline raises urgent questions about the sustainability of current land management practices and highlights the need for bird-friendly farming approaches across the region.

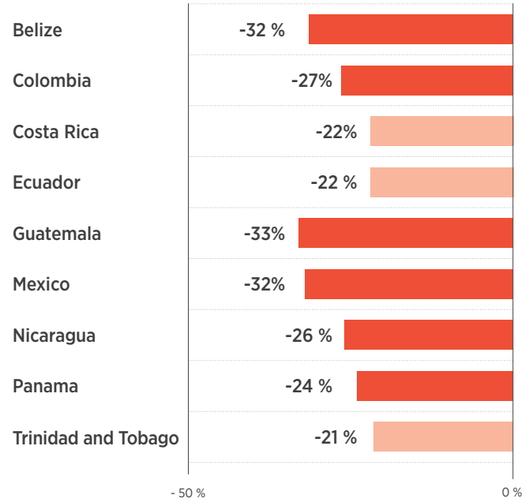
Habitat
Grasslands & agricultural areas

CBC signal
Declining across Latin America & the Caribbean

Conservation concern
Even adaptable species are decreasing

Conservation response
Need for bird-friendly farming practices

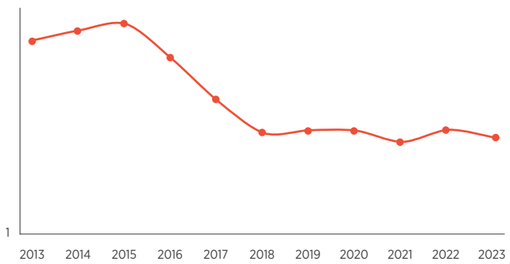
Trends Across Countries and Territories (2013–2023)



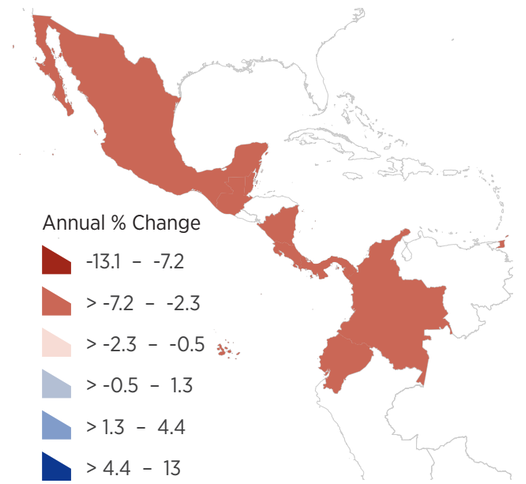
What CBC Trends Show (2013–2023)

-26 % decline in Latin America and the Caribbean

Abundance index (predicted count / constant effort)



How is This Bird Doing?



Trouble Along
Freshwater Corridors

This distinctive flycatcher depends on streams, ponds, and other freshwater habitats where it hunts aquatic insects from low perches. CBC trends show regional declines in LAC even as populations remain stable or increase in the U.S. and Canada, pointing to region-specific threats. These data underscore the critical importance of protecting and restoring freshwater corridors throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

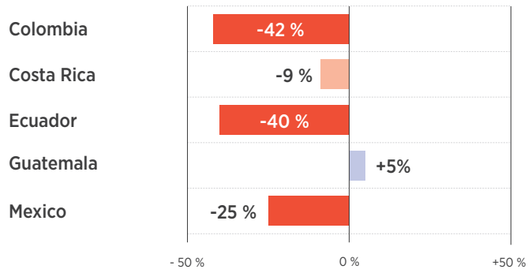
Habitat
Streams, ponds & freshwater corridors

CBC signal
Declining Across Latin America & the Caribbean, Stable in the U.S. and Canada

Conservation concern
Freshwater habitats face regional pressures

Conservation response
Protect & restore freshwater corridors

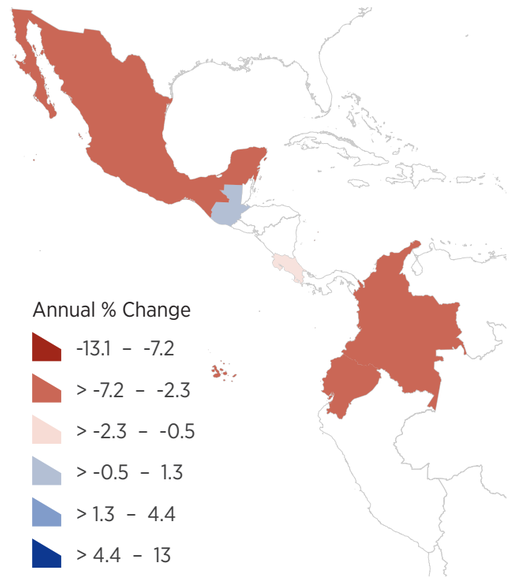
Trends Across Countries and Territories (2013–2023)



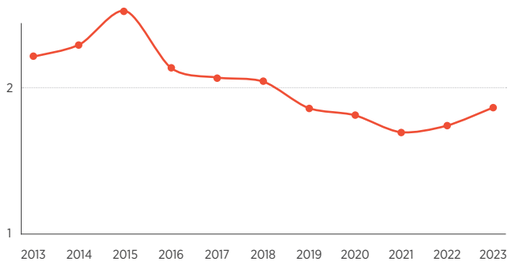
What CBC Trends Show (2013–2023)

-26 % decline in Latin America and the Caribbean

How is This Bird Doing?



Abundance index (predicted count / constant effort)

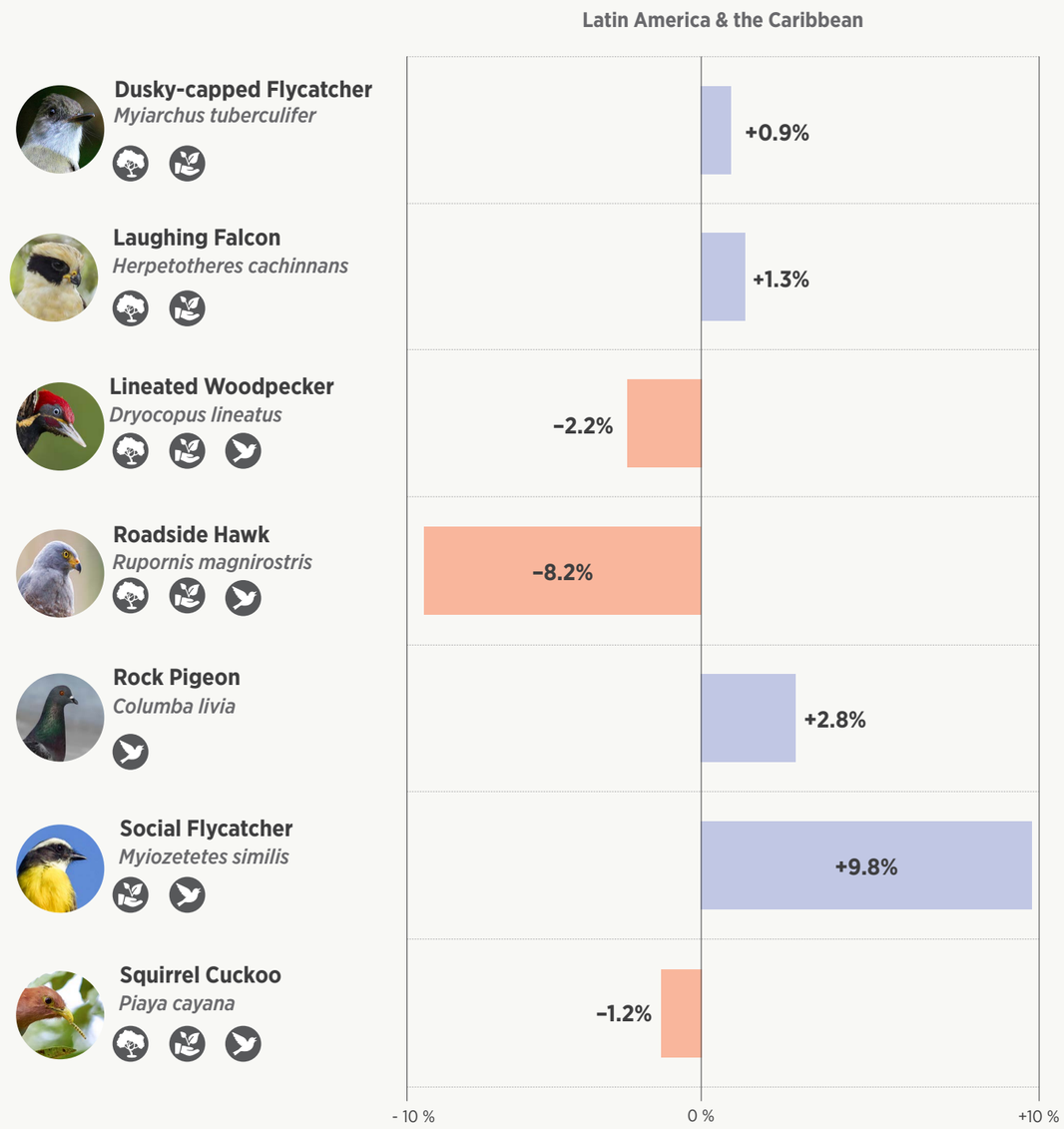


Black Phoebe
Sayornis nigricans



1.2 Mixed Regional Patterns

Resident species with unclear trends in Latin America and the Caribbean may not be experiencing dramatic changes in their populations, but their continued presence is important for ecosystem health and cultural identity. Monitoring these species helps ensure early detection of future changes and maintains our understanding of the region's ecological balance.



A Sign
of Stability

This agile, long-tailed cuckoo moves through forest canopies and gardens hunting caterpillars and large insects, playing an important role in controlling pest populations. CBC data show relatively stable populations across its range. The Squirrel Cuckoo's steady presence reminds us that maintaining diverse, connected habitats supports both common species and the ecosystems they inhabit.

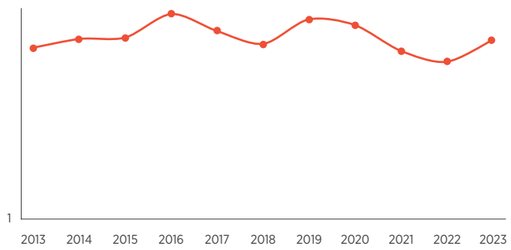
Habitat
Forests, woodlands & gardens

CBC signal
Stable across Latin America & the Caribbean

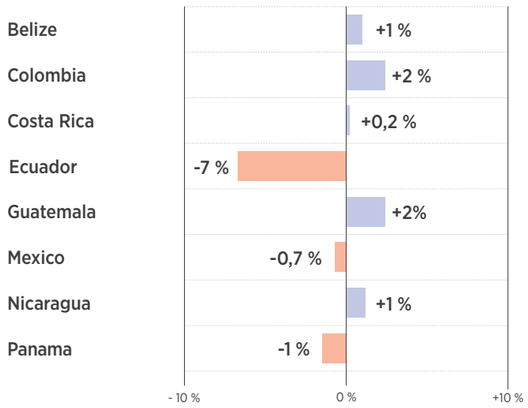
Conservation concern
Ongoing monitoring remains essential

Conservation response
Maintain connected forest habitats

Abundance index (predicted count / constant effort)



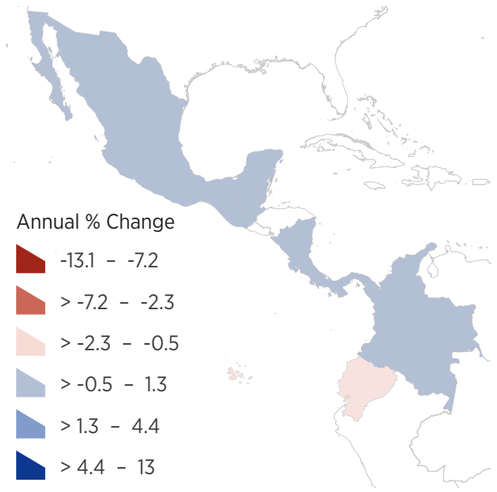
Trends Across Countries and Territories (2013–2023)



What CBC Trends Show (2013–2023)

-1.2 % decline in Latin America and the Caribbean

How is This Bird Doing?



Squirrel Cuckoo
Piaya cayana

3.2 HEMISPHERIC TRENDS

Understanding connections between bird population trends **across the Americas.**



This section explores six recurring patterns observed across the Americas.

2.1 Expanding Presence in Latin America and the Caribbean

2.2 Hemispheric Increases

2.3 Hemispheric Declines

2.4 Expanding Presence in U.S. and Canada

2.5 Diminishing Presence in U.S and Canada

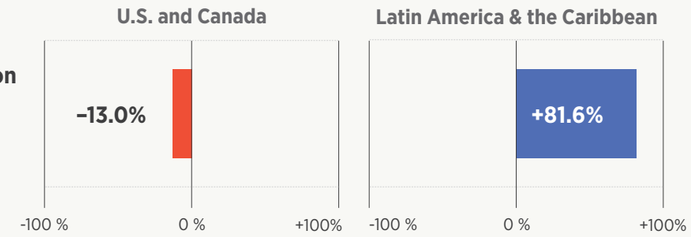
2.6 Mixed or Uncertain Trends

2.1 Expanding Presence in Latin America and the Caribbean

One species is experiencing notable increases in Latin America and the Caribbean, while also declining in the U.S. and Canada. These gains may reflect improving habitat conditions in the Latin American and Caribbean region, changes in food resources, or other positive developments. Understanding what is driving these successes can offer valuable lessons for conservation across the hemisphere.



Black-crowned Night Heron
Nycticorax nycticorax

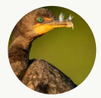


Population Trend And Confidence (2013–2023)

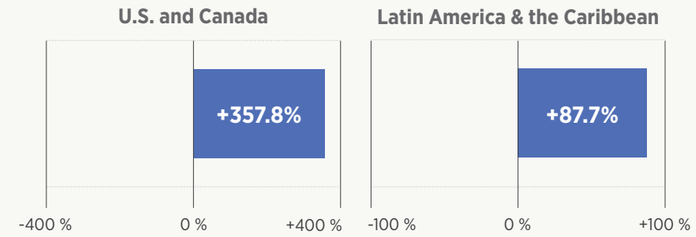
- **Increase** High confidence
- **Increase** Directional signal
- **Decline** High confidence
- **Decline** Directional signal

2.2 Hemispheric Increases

One species shows significant increases across the hemisphere and may be benefiting from conservation actions, adaptation to human-altered landscapes, or shifts in prey/habitat availability. However, increases can also reflect ecological imbalances (e.g., expansion of generalists at the expense of specialists, climate and land cover change).



Neotropic Cormorant
Nannopterum brasilianum



LAC Conservation Initiatives

Protected Areas · Working Lands · Coastal Resilience · Community Building



Black-crowned Night Heron
Nycticorax nycticorax

Thriving
in Wetlands

This stocky, nocturnal heron hunts fish, frogs, and aquatic invertebrates in wetlands ranging from natural marshes to urban ponds and aquaculture facilities. CBC data reveal increases across Latin America and the Caribbean. These positive trends raise important questions about what's driving wetland bird success in the region and how to sustain these gains.

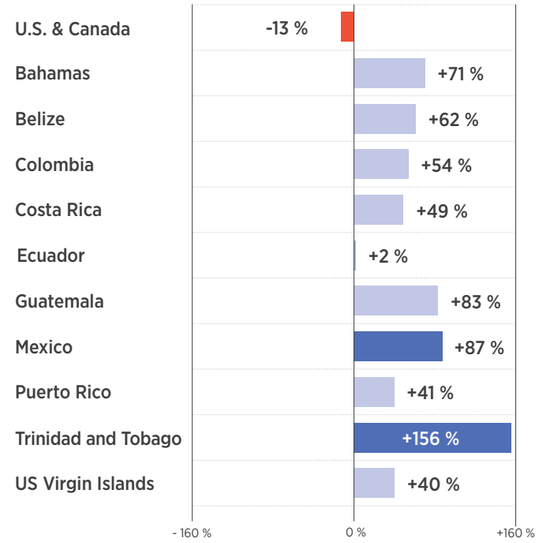
Habitat
Wetlands, marshes & ponds

CBC signal
Increasing across Latin America & the Caribbean

Conservation concern
Understand what's driving population gains

Conservation response
Protect healthy wetland ecosystems

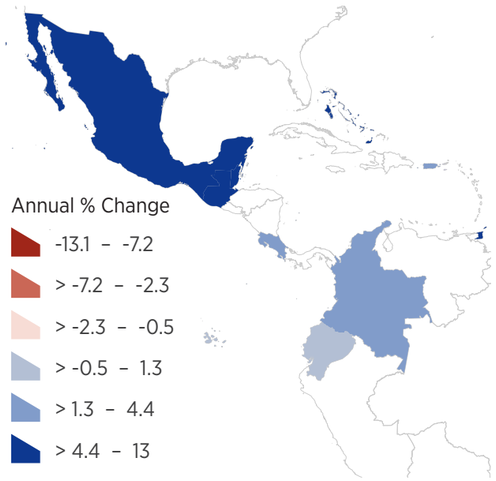
Trends Across Countries and Territories (2013–2023)



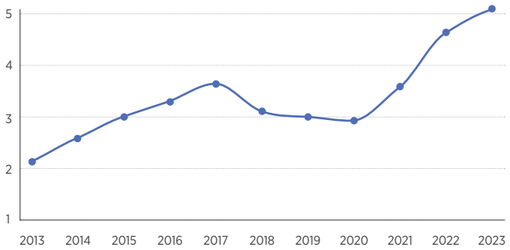
What CBC Trends Show (2013–2023)

+81 % Increase in Latin America and the Caribbean

How is This Bird Doing?



Abundance index (predicted count / constant effort)



Healthy Waters, Healthy Birds

This sleek diving bird pursues fish in rivers, lakes, coastal waters, and reservoirs, adapting readily to both wild and human-modified aquatic habitats. CBC trends show strong increases throughout its range. These encouraging trends highlight opportunities for coexistence between waterbirds and human water use, while also emphasizing the importance of maintaining water quality and fish populations in managed landscapes.

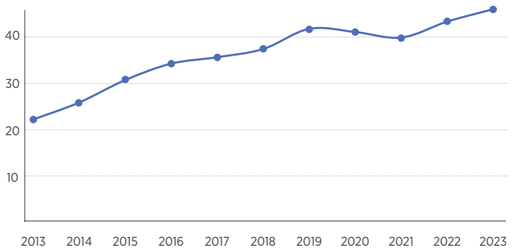
Habitat
Rivers, lakes & coastal waters

CBC signal
Increasing across Latin America & the Caribbean

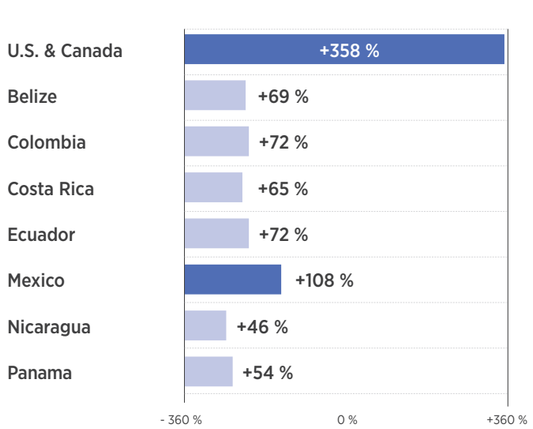
Conservation concern
Healthy waters sustain thriving populations

Conservation response
Maintain water quality & healthy fisheries

Abundance index (predicted count / constant effort)



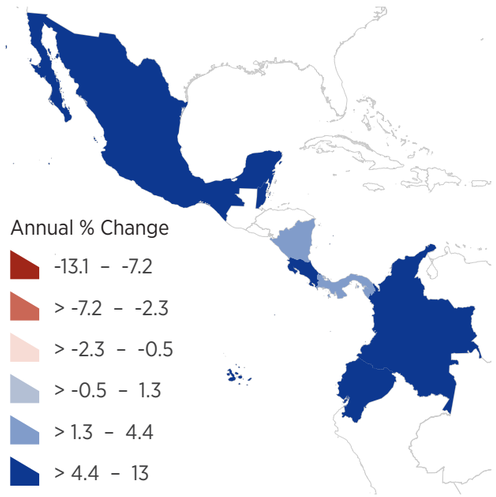
Trends Across Countries and Territories (2013–2023)



What CBC Trends Show (2013–2023)

+88 % Increase in Latin America and the Caribbean

How is This Bird Doing?



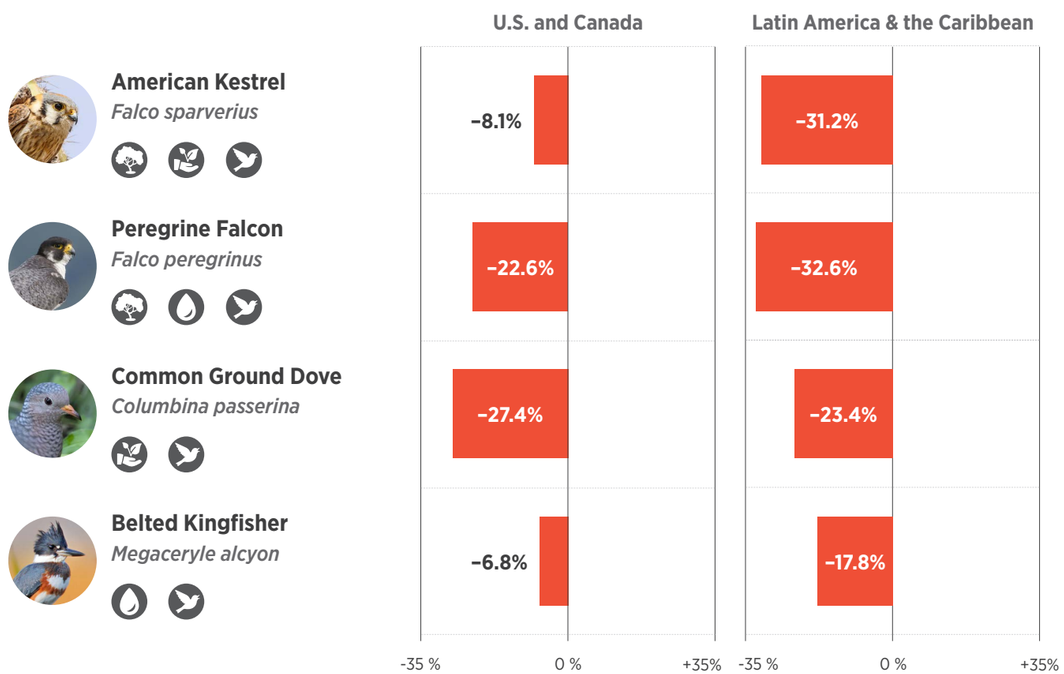
Neotropic Cormorant
Nannopterum brasilianum





2.3 Hemispheric Declines

Species showing significant declines across the hemisphere may be facing widespread threats that transcend borders—such as habitat loss, pesticide use, or climate change. These declines signal the need for coordinated, hemispheric conservation action and may indicate ecosystem health issues affecting birds throughout their migratory or resident ranges.



Grasslands
in Decline

North America's smallest falcon hunts grasshoppers and small rodents in grasslands, agricultural fields, and meadows. CBC data show widespread declines across the U.S. and Canada and Latin America & the Caribbean, signaling growing pressure on grassland ecosystems. These shared trends reveal that the kestrel's challenges cross borders and highlight the need for coordinated conservation to protect opencountry habitats throughout the Americas.

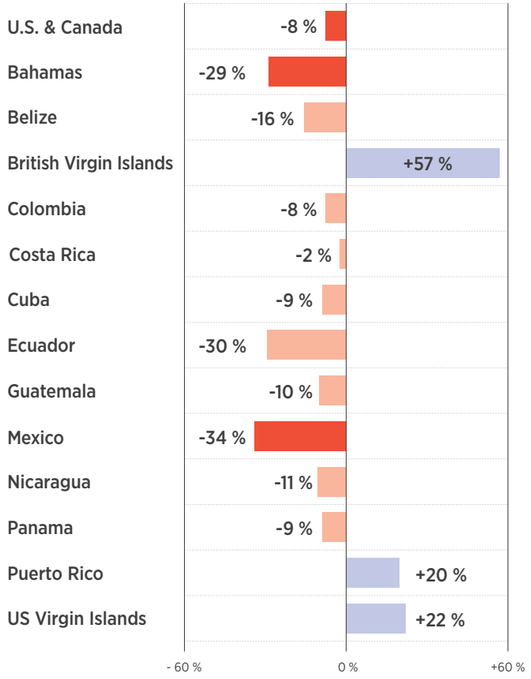
Habitat
Grasslands, fields & open country

CBC signal
Declining across the U.S. and Canada and Latin America & the Caribbean

Conservation concern
Grassland ecosystems are under pressure

Conservation response
Protect & restore open grassland habitats

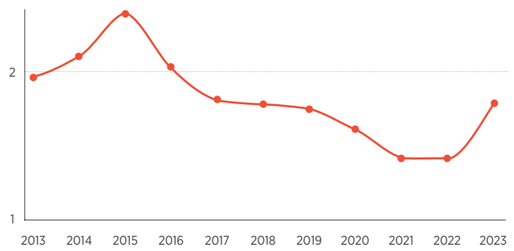
Trends Across Countries and Territories (2013–2023)



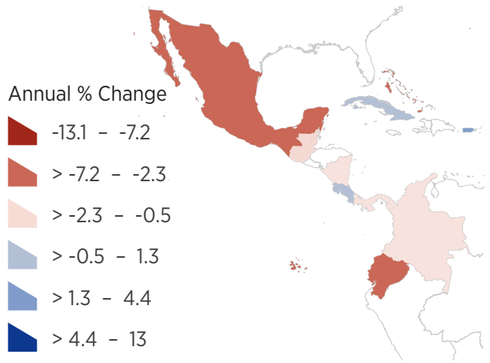
What CBC Trends Show (2013–2023)

-31 % decline in Latin America and the Caribbean

Abundance index (predicted count / constant effort)



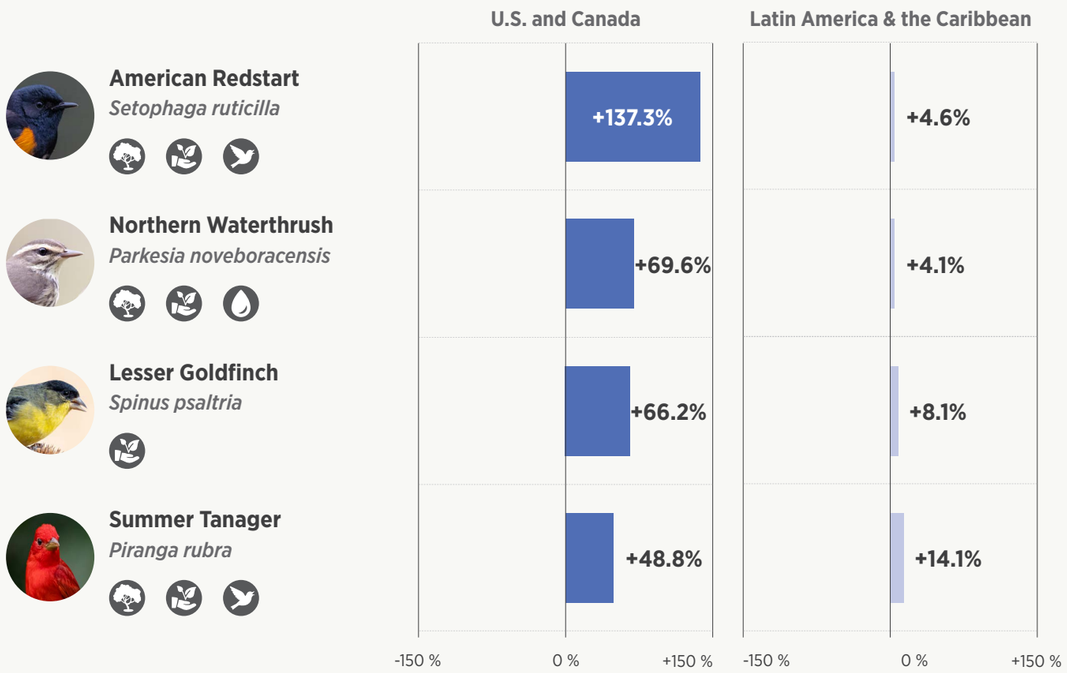
How is This Bird Doing?

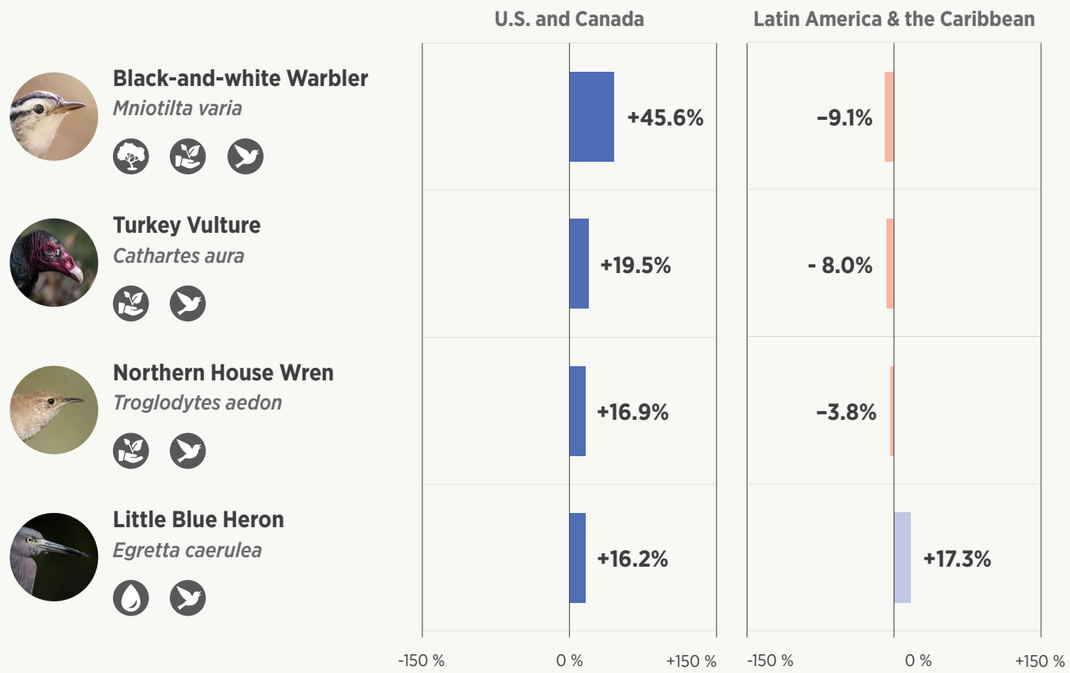


American Kestrel
Falco sparverius

2.4 Expanding Presence in U.S. and Canada

Some birds are being seen more often across the U.S. and Canada even as their numbers remain stable in Latin America and the Caribbean. This expanding presence in the north may reflect birds taking advantage of new or improving habitats, possibly as conditions change with climate, and could indicate overall northward expansion of ranges.



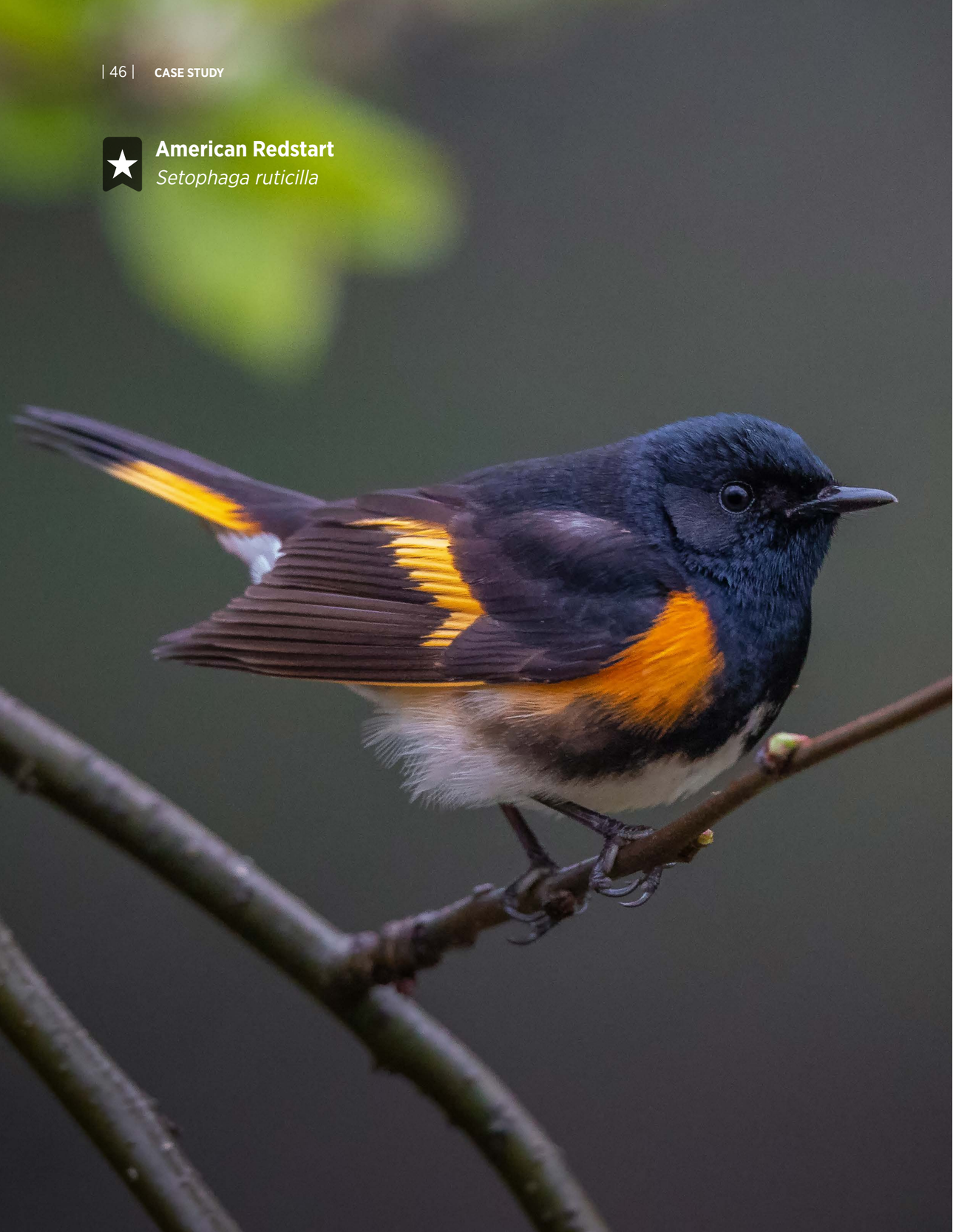


Population Trend And Confidence (2013–2023)

- **Increase** High confidence
- **Increase** Directional signal
- **Decline** High confidence
- **Decline** Directional signal

LAC Conservation Initiatives

- Protected Areas
- Working Lands
- Coastal Resilience
- Community Building



American Redstart
Setophaga ruticilla

Shifting Winter Range

This striking black-and-orange warbler breeds in North American forests and winters in the Caribbean and Central America, making it a true hemispheric traveler. CBC data show increasing winter presence in northern areas, suggesting potential shifts in migration patterns or wintering strategies in response to climate change. These dynamic trends highlight how migratory species are responding in real-time to environmental change, raising important questions about the future of hemispheric migration patterns.

Habitat
Forests across two continents

CBC signal
Increasing winter presence in the U.S. and Canada

Conservation concern
Migration patterns may be shifting

Conservation response
Protect habitats across the migratory route

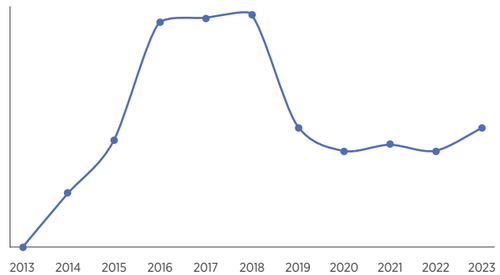
Trends Across Countries and Territories (2013–2023)



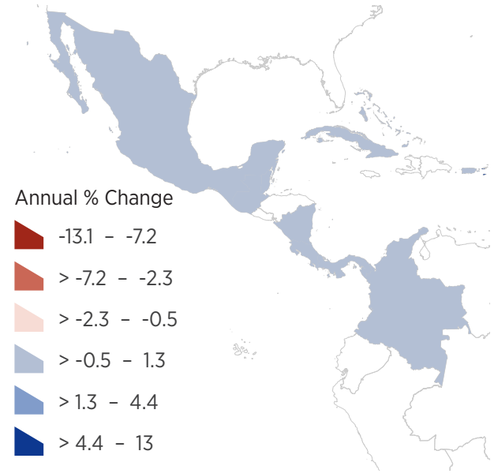
What CBC Trends Show (2013–2023)

+4 % Increase in Latin America and the Caribbean

Abundance index (predicted count / constant effort)

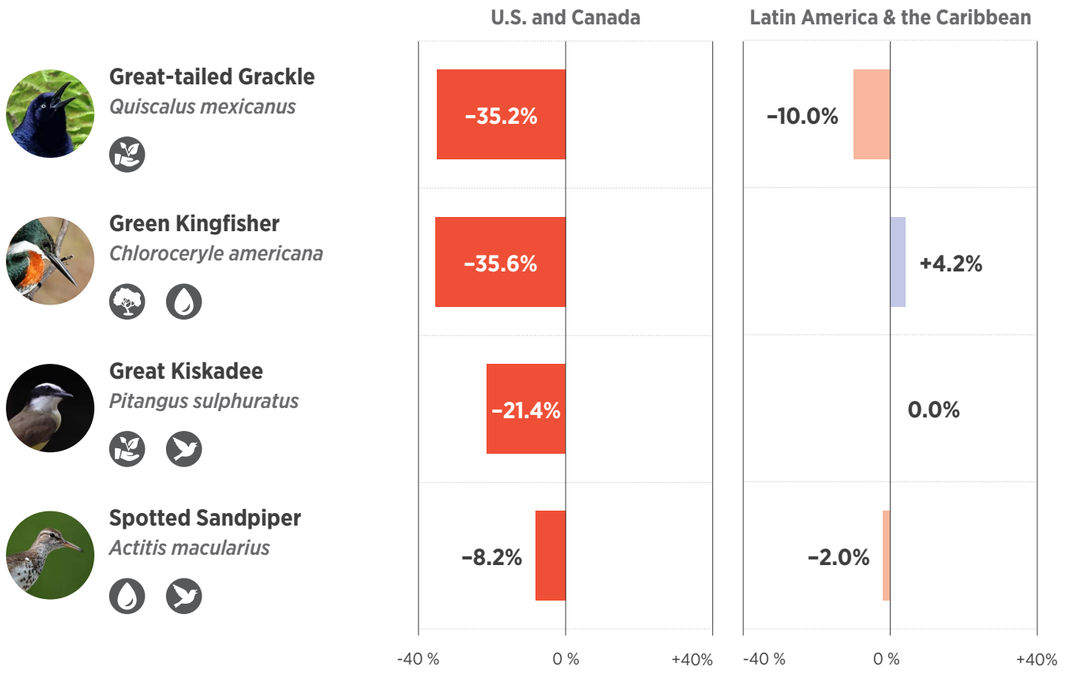


How is This Bird Doing?



2.5 Diminishing Presence in U.S and Canada

Some birds are becoming less common across the U.S. and Canada, a concerning trend that may be driven by habitat loss, urbanization, agricultural intensification, or other regional pressures. While these species may remain stable or even do well in Latin America and the Caribbean, their diminishing presence in the north signals a need for targeted regional conservation strategies.



Population Trend And Confidence (2013–2023)

- **Increase** High confidence
- **Increase** Directional signal
- **Decline** High confidence
- **Decline** Directional signal

LAC Conservation Initiatives

- Protected Areas
- Coastal Resilience
- Working Lands
- Community Building





Great Kiskadee
Pitangus sulphuratus

Adaptability
Has Limits

One of Latin America and the Caribbean's most adaptable predators, the Great Kiskadee hunts insects, small fish, and other prey in urban parks, farms, and forest edges. CBC trends show the species remaining stable in Latin America and the Caribbean while declining in U.S. and Canada. These contrasting patterns suggest that even highly adaptable birds face region-specific pressures, highlighting the importance of conservation strategies tailored to local conditions.

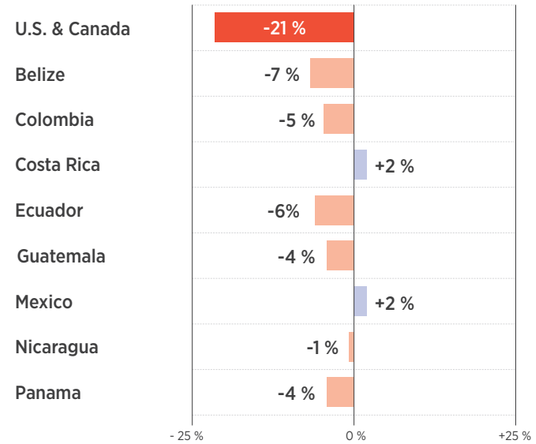
Habitat
Urban parks, farms & forest edges

CBC signal
Stable in Latin America & the Caribbean, declining in the U.S. and Canada

Conservation concern
Even adaptable species face regional pressures

Conservation response
Protect diverse habitats across regions

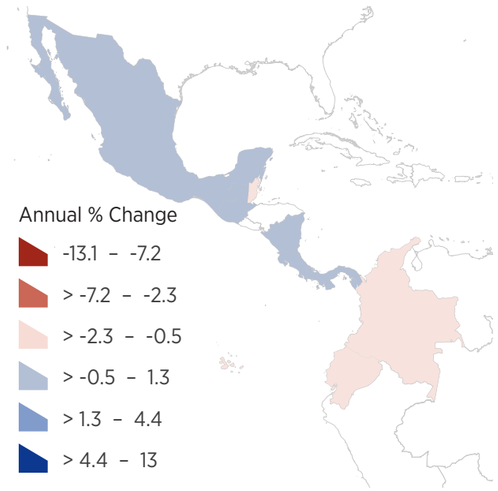
Trends Across Countries and Territories (2013–2023)



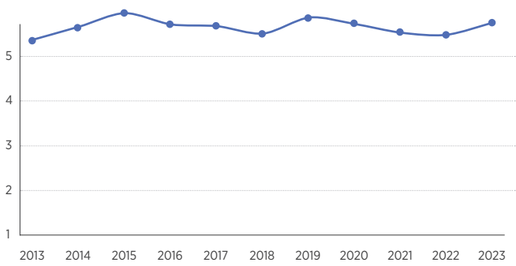
What CBC Trends Show (2013–2023)

+0.04 % Increase in Latin America and the Caribbean

How is This Bird Doing?



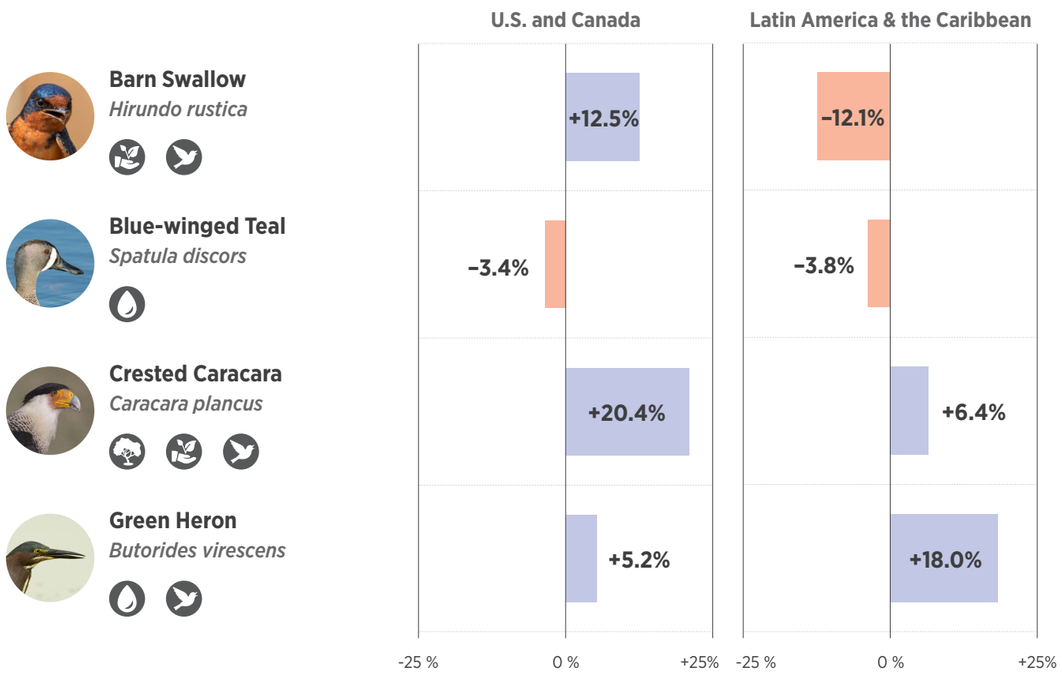
Abundance index (predicted count / constant effort)

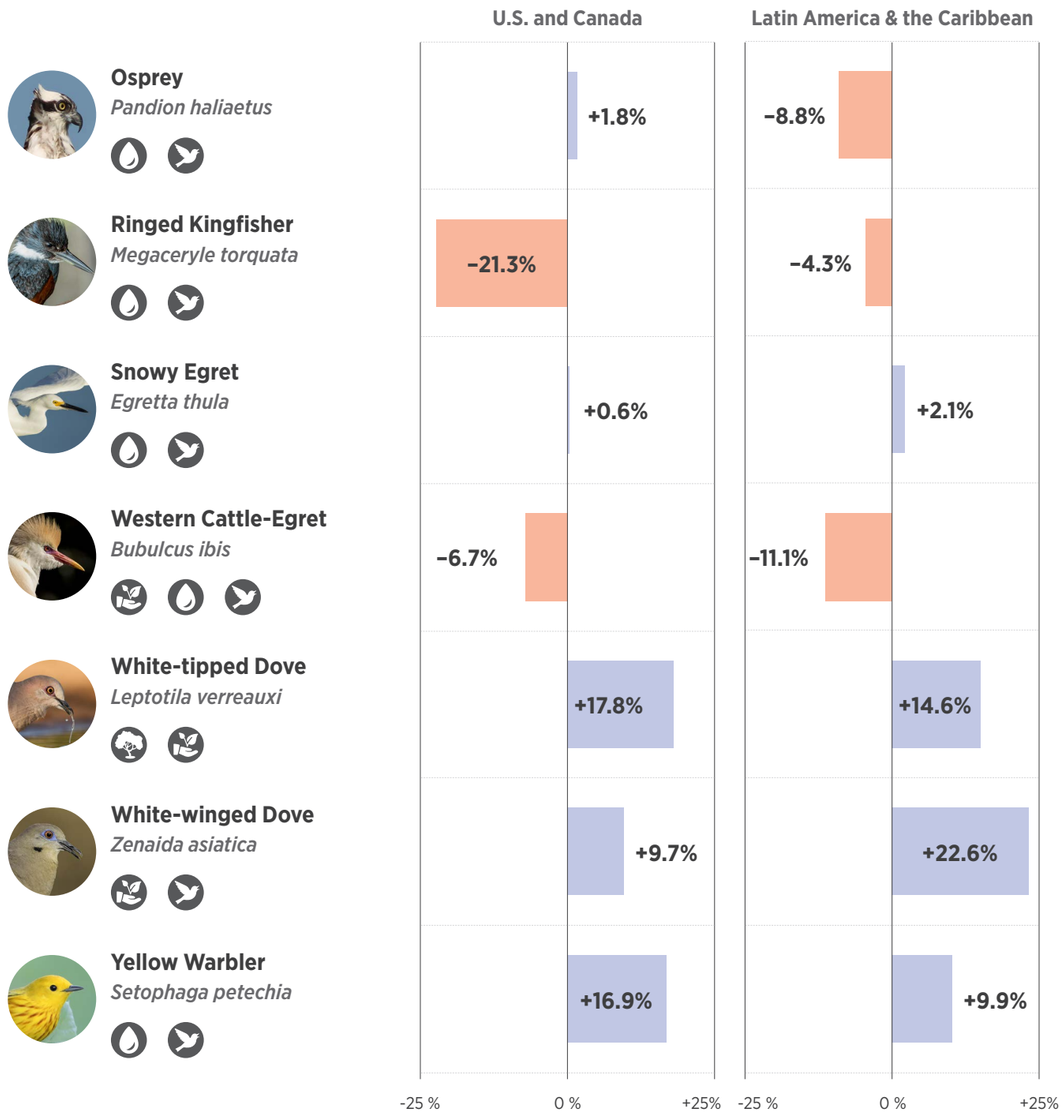


2.6 Mixed or Uncertain Trends

These species show no statistically significant trends in either the U.S. and Canada or Latin America and the Caribbean, or display mixed signals that require further monitoring to interpret. While this could indicate stability, suggesting resilience or successful conservation efforts, it can also mask emerging changes that longer time series might reveal. Species like the Green Heron and Yellow Warbler* show modest increases in both regions, hinting at potential positive trajectories, while others like the Barn Swallow display opposing trends that may signal climate-driven range shifts or differing regional pressures. This group underscores the importance of continued, expanded monitoring: as CBC coverage grows and time series lengthen, unclear signals will sharpen into actionable trends.

*Trends for this report were analyzed before Yellow Warbler was split into Northern Yellow Warbler and Mangrove Yellow Warbler. Because CBC records may include populations now recognized as separate species, the results should be interpreted in light of the taxonomy used at the time of analysis.





Population Trend And Confidence (2013–2023)

- **Increase** High confidence
- **Increase** Directional signal
- **Decline** High confidence
- **Decline** Directional signal

LAC Conservation Initiatives

- Protected Areas
- Working Lands
- Coastal Resilience
- Community Building

4

CONSERVATION FUELED BY SCIENCE

How the Christmas Bird Count Drives Conservation

Birds reveal
environmental change

CBC measures
bird population trends

Science guides
conservation decisions

People protect
birds and habitats

Turning bird observations into conservation action

Birds are powerful indicators of environmental health.

When bird populations shift, they signal changes in habitat quality, climate patterns, water availability, food webs, or ecosystem function that affect all wildlife—and people. A declining kingfisher may suggest degraded stream quality. An increasing heron population could indicate that wetland restoration is working. Stable grassland species might signal that agricultural landscapes are maintaining biodiversity.

The CBC captures these signals across entire landscapes, from urban neighborhoods to remote wilderness, creating comprehensive snapshots that reveal how our shared environment is changing and where conservation action is needed most.

The Christmas Bird Count provides long-term, standardized monitoring data for bird populations across Latin America and the Caribbean—a critical foundation that has been missing from conservation planning in the region.

Audubon's conservation work is fundamentally science-driven: rigorous data like these CBC trends directly shape where we invest resources, which habitats we prioritize for protection, and how we measure whether our strategies are working.



These new trends offer important clues about which species may be thriving, which are declining, and where populations are shifting in response to environmental change, helping to ensure that protection efforts, habitat restoration, and community engagement are targeted where birds—and the ecosystems they indicate—may need help most.

Consider how CBC data creates opportunities to validate and refine conservation action: declining Blue-black Grassquits across agricultural landscapes suggest urgent questions for our **Working Lands** initiative—are bird-friendly farming practices reaching the areas where this species needs them most? Can partnerships with landowners transforming millions of hectares into productive habitat reverse these declines? Meanwhile, increasing populations of Black-crowned Night Herons and Neotropic Cormorants in coastal and wetland areas present opportunities to better understand whether **Coastal Resilience** and **Protected Area** investments are achieving their conservation objectives—and to identify which management approaches are working best. Declining Black Phoebes and Green Kingfishers in freshwater systems raise important questions about riparian habitat quality that can guide restoration priorities. And stable species like the beloved *Great Kiskadee* and *Squirrel Cuckoo*, familiar across diverse landscapes, become powerful ambassadors for **Community Building**, connecting one million people across the region to the conservation work that sustains the species they encounter every day.

Yet these 44 species and ten years of trend data represent only the beginning. Expanding CBC participation across Latin America and the Caribbean would unlock trend data for hundreds more species and to new regions, extend time series to detect longer-term patterns, and provide the robust datasets essential for identifying populations at risk and measuring conservation success with confidence. Standard protocols like those used in the CBC are the gold standard for detecting real population change amid natural variation. By joining or starting a CBC circle in your community, you become part of a hemispheric network generating the science that drives conservation decisions, protects critical habitats, and ensures that birds continue to thrive across the Americas for generations to come.

5

COUNT WITH US

The story continues with you.

The trends in this publication represent just the beginning of what's possible when communities across the hemisphere come together to count birds.

Explore the full CBC dataset and interactive visualizations at christmasbirdcount.org, where you can dive deeper into species trends, compare regions, and discover patterns in the data. Better yet, become part of the story by participating in the Christmas Bird Count in your area. Whether you're an experienced birder or just beginning to notice the species around you, there's a place for you in the CBC community.

Ready to join? Visit christmasbirdcount.org to find a count circle near you or learn how to establish a new circle in your community. Each count takes place during a 24-hour period between December 14 and January 5, and participation can range from a few hours to a full day of counting. Every observation matters—your counts today become the conservation science of tomorrow.

The birds counted in the CBC are part of ecosystems that Audubon and partners are working to protect across Latin America and the Caribbean through strategic investments in protected areas, working lands, coastal resilience, and community building. Learn more about conservation in action and ways to support this work. Together, we're building a future where birds thrive across the Americas—and it starts with counting, one circle at a time.



6

HOW TRENDS WERE MODELED

Abundance index graphs and trend estimates are included in this report.

ABUNDANCE INDEX

What is it?

Abundance index graphs depict national and regional abundance indices per year for a given species.

How is it calculated?

An abundance index comes from a statistical model and represents an expected count of birds given a constant amount of observer effort.

National & regional estimates

Abundance indices are computed for each species, year, and country (i.e., national abundance indices) and those estimates are aggregated per species and year across countries to the region (i.e., regional abundance indices).

TREND

Definition

The term trend represents the average annual percent change in national and regional abundance indices over the period between 2013 and 2023.

Confidence

Trend estimates come with statistical uncertainty because they come from a sample. In this report we denote species trends that have a 90% chance or greater of reflecting a true increase or decrease in abundance as “high confidence”.

Technical reference

The directional signal of other trends are noted but are considered too uncertain to make strong conclusions. For technical details on how abundance indices and trends are computed see Smith et al. (2024).



VALIDITY

When trends are reliable

The validity of national and regional abundance trends reported here depends on the degree to which changes in habitat quantity and quality in CBC circles represent changes in habitat quantity and quality over an entire nation.

Important limitation

If changes in grassland quality and quantity in CBC circles are representative of changes across a nation, then national trends of grassland birds will be somewhat reliable. In contrast, if changes in grassland quality and quantity inside CBC circles are quite different from those outside CBC circles, then estimated trends of grassland birds will not be reliable generalizations.

Citation

Smith, A.C., D. Binley, A., Daly, L., Edwards, B.P., Ethier, D., Frei, B., Iles, D., Meehan, T.D., Michel, N.L. and Smith, P.A., 2024. Spatially explicit Bayesian hierarchical models improve estimates of avian population status and trends. Ornithological Applications, 126(1), p.duad056.

Photo Credits

LAC CBC Trends Publication

Photos: **(cover)** Northern Waterthrush - *Parkesia noveboracensis*, Joshua Galicki/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p4-5)** Evelyn Alvarez, Kelly Farias, Pedro Arturo Camargo, Loreta Roselli during a Christmas Bird Count at La Reseda reservoir in Triángulo del Puma, Colombia, Dec. 20, 2023, Luis Bernardo Cano; **(p7-8)** Crested Caracara - Caracara plancus, Elizabeth Yicheng Shen/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p10-11)** Participants conduct early-morning bird observation during the Audubon Christmas Bird Count in Lake Cuitzeo, Michoacán, Mexico, Dec. 25, 2022, Luis Antonio Rojas; **(p12)** Colima Pygmy-Owl - *Glaucidium palmarum*, San Blas, Mexico, Mark Stackhouse; **(p13)** Christmas Bird Count 2024 in Río Upano, Ecuador, Galo Real; **(p14-15)** American Kestrel – *Falco sparverius*, Binh Nguyen/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p22)** Blue-black Grassquit –*Volatinia jacarina*, Martin Pelanek/Shutterstock; Ruddy Ground Dove – *Columbina talpacoti*, Burdos/Shutterstock; Blue-gray Tanager –*Thraupis episcopus*, Peter Hogan/Audubon Photography Awards; Tropical Kingbird –Tyrannus melancholicus, Rick Derevan/Audubon Photography Awards; Boat-billed Flycatcher – *Megarynchus pitangua*, FLPA/Neil Bowman/Shutterstock; **(p23)** Black Vulture – *Coragyps atratus*, Jim Akers/Audubon Photography Awards; Black Phoebe – *Sayornis nigricans*, Joanne Bartkus/Audubon Photography; Great Egret – *Ardea alba*, Jackie Bailey Labovitz; **(p24)** Blue-black Grassquit – *Volatinia jacarina*, Martin Pelanek/Shutterstock; **(p27)** Black Phoebe – *Sayornis nigricans*, Joanne Bartkus/Audubon Photography; **(p28)** Woodpecker – *Dryocopus lineatus*, Alphonsus Deodatu/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p29)** Dusky-capped Flycatcher – *Myiarchus tuberculifer*, John Richardson/Audubon Photography Awards; Laughing Falcon – *Herpetotheres cachinnans glennbartley* /imageBROKER/Shutterstock; Lineated Woodpecker – *Dryocopus lineatus*, Alphonsus Deodatus/Audubon Photography Awards; Roadside Hawk – *Rupornis magnirostris*, Eric Mitch/Audubon Photography Awards; Rock Pigeon – *Columba livia*, Sharon Milligan/Audubon Photography Awards; Social Flycatcher – *Myiozetetes similis*, Michael Pazzani/Audubon Photography Awards; Common Squirrel Cuckoo – *Piaya cayana*, Carlos Arango/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p31)** Common Squirrel Cuckoo – *Piaya cayana*, Carlos Arango/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p34)** Black-crowned Night Heron – *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Stewart Cherlin/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p35)** Neotropic Cormorant – *Nannopterum brasilianum*, Nancy Malecki/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p36)** Black-crowned Night Heron – *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Stewart Cherlin/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p39)** Neotropic Cormorant – *Nannopterum brasilianum*, Nancy Malecki/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p40)** Peregrine Falcon – *Falco peregrinus*, Trish Oster/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p41)** American Kestrel – *Falco sparverius*, Macy Anne Carman-Goeke/Audubon Photography Awards; Peregrine Falcon –Falco peregrinus, Mathew Malwitz/Audubon Photography Awards; Common Ground Dove – *Columbina passerina*, John Troth/Audubon Photography Awards; Belted Kingfisher - Megaceryle alcyon, Bob Feldman; **(p43)** American Kestrel – *Falco sparverius*, Danny Hancock/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p44)** American Redstart – *Setophaga ruticilla*, Simon d'Entremont/Audubon Photography Awards; Northern Waterthrush – *Parkesia noveboracensis*, Victoria Restrepo/Audubon Photography Awards; Lesser Goldfinch – *Spinus psaltria*, Jacqueline Burke/Audubon Photography Awards; Summer Tanager –Piranga rubra, Juan Carlos Lopez Mejia/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p45)** Black-and-white Warbler – *Mniotilta varia*, Jessica Nelson/Audubon Photography Awards; Turkey Vulture – *Cathartes aura*, William Burgess/Audubon Photography Awards; Northern House Wren – *Troglodytes aedon*, Lauren Craft/Audubon Photography Awards; Little Blue Heron – *Egretta caerulea*, Melissa James/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p46)** American Redstart –Setophaga ruticilla, Simon d'Entremont/Audubon Photography Awards, **(p48)** Great-tailed Grackle – *Quiscalus mexicanus*, Brad Lewis/Audubon Photography Awards; Green Kingfisher – *Chloroceryle americana*, John Richardson/Audubon Photography Awards; Great Kiskadee – *Pitangus sulphuratus*, Jill Payne/Audubon Photography Awards; Spotted Sandpiper – *Actitis macularius*, Nancy Malecki/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p49)** Spotted Sandpiper – *Actitis macularius*, Nancy Malecki/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p50)** Great Kiskadee –Pitangus sulphuratus, Larry Peruffo/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p52)** Barn Swallow - Hirundo rustica, Justin Griggs/Audubon Photography Awards; Blue-winged Teal – *Spatula discors*, Lynnette Spence/Great Backyard Bird Count; Crested Caracara – *Caracara plancus*, Rob Sabatini/Audubon Photography Awards; Green Heron – *Butorides virescens*, Michael LaBarbera/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p53)** Osprey – *Pandion haliaetus*, Phoebe Clark/Audubon Photography Awards; Ringed Kingfisher –Megaceryle torquata, Eric Antifilo Aguilar/Audubon Photography Awards; Snowy Egret – *Egretta thula*, Lindsay Donald/Audubon Photography Awards; Western Cattle Egret –Bubulcus ibis, Karen Willes/Audubon Photography Awards; White-tipped Dove – *Leptotila verreauxi*, Phillip Hardy/Audubon Photography Awards; White-winged Dove – *Zenaida asiatica*, Ann Pacheco/Audubon Photography Awards; Yellow Warbler – *Setophaga petechia*, Joshua Galicki/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p54-55)** Peruvian Pelican, Guanay Cormorant and Neotropic Cormorant in Playa Tunquén, Valparaíso, Chile, Gaspar Ramirez/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p57)** Black-crowned Night Heron – *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Kelly Hetrick/Audubon Photography Awards; **(p58-59)** Jonathan Vargas, leader of the Audubon CBC, conducts a bird observation with his three-person group in Lake Cuitzeo, Michoacán, Mexico, Dec. 25, 2022; **(p60-61)** Participants in the Christmas Bird Count search through their binoculars in the Chuiraxamolo Regional Ecological Park, Sololá, Guatemala, Jan. 4, 2026, Cuenca Studios; **(p62-63)** Summer Tanager – *Piranga rubra*, Juan Carlos Lopez Mejia/Audubon Photography Awards; Nubia Morales shows a picture on her camera to Loreta Roselli and the group at La Reseda reservoir in Triángulo del Puma, Colombia, Dec. 20, 2023, Luis Bernardo Cano


Audubon