



Focal Species Fact Sheets

Birds Connect Our World



World Migratory Bird Day

American Kestrel • *Falco sparverius*



General information

- Adult average weight: 4.1 oz (116.2 g).
- American Kestrels are the smallest and most colorful falcons in North America.
- They do not build their own nests but instead nest in cavities made by other birds, and in nest boxes built by humans.
- Widespread throughout the Americas and found in almost every habitat type within their range including fields, cities, deserts, plains, mountains, and tropical lowlands.

Breeding:

- They breed all throughout the Americas, though most commonly in the northern US and Canada.
- Females normally lay 3-6 eggs in late April or early May.

Migration:

- Canada and US populations can travel as far south as Panama and the Caribbean. Birds breeding on Tierra del Fuego migrate north to the South American mainland before winter begins in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Some Kestrels migrate long distances, while others do not migrate at all.
- Migration peaks from mid-September through mid-October.

Overwintering:

- Most American Kestrels breeding in North America overwinter in the United States. Many southern populations remain in their breeding grounds.
- In North America, male Kestrels winter farther north than female Kestrels.
- In the Northern Hemisphere, Kestrels winter from December to February.

Threats/Conservation:

- Although Kestrels are well-adapted to human-dominated environments, decreases in foraging habitats and nest sites and increased urbanization negatively impact them.
- Insecticides, which can kill kestrels outright, also affect their populations by decreasing the abundance of their prey.
- In some areas, artificial nest boxes allow Kestrels to inhabit new areas and increase their numbers.

Arctic Tern • *Sterna paradisaea*



General information

- Adult average weight: 3.5 oz (99.2 g).
- The longest bird migratory route on Earth, equal to flying twice around the planet.
- They forage by plunge-diving to catch prey below the water's surface, taking small fish from the surface, or chasing flying insects in the air.
- Arctic Terns are social birds, foraging in groups and nesting on the ground in colonies. They often rest on ice and they fly on graceful and buoyant wings.

Breeding:

- Arctic Terns have a circumpolar breeding distribution covering the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of Europe, Asia, and North America.
- They breed in treeless areas with little to no ground cover, in open boreal forests, and on small islands and barrier beaches on the northeastern Atlantic Coast.
- Their breeding season is short, and Arctic Terns spend only 2 to 3 months in their nesting areas.

Migration:

- They migrate from pole to pole, over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans to food-rich waters around Antarctica, where they hang out on pack ice during the Southern Hemisphere's summer.
- Their migrations take them to every ocean and near every continent. South of their Arctic breeding grounds, they are seldom seen from land.
- They migrate in Fall from September to October and in Spring from April to May.

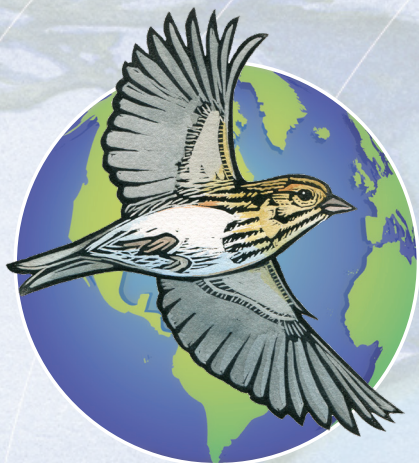
Overwintering:

- They winter on the Antarctic coast during the southern summer and migrate back to Antarctica about six months later.
- Wintering season is from November to February.

Threats/Conservation:

- Threats include disturbance of colonies, degradation of nesting habitat, and decline in fish stocks.
- In the late nineteenth century, Arctic Terns were hunted for their feathers, which were used in women's hats, thus, reducing their population sizes; however, the species is believed to be at lower risk since 1988.

Baird's Sparrow • *Centronyx bairdii*



General information

- Adult average weight: 0.64 oz (18.14 g).
- Baird's Sparrows are partially nomadic, with breeding populations often shifting locations from year to year.
- They escape pursuers by running through the grass rather than taking flight.
- They prefer native grasslands and lightly grazed pastures for nesting and foraging.

Breeding:

- During the breeding season, Baird's Sparrows depend on tallgrass or mixed grass native prairies.
- They breed on the northern Great Plains.
- Their nest is a shallow open cup made of dry grass, sometimes with some weeds added.
Their breeding season is June-July.

Migration:

- They migrate from their summer breeding habitat, the tall grass prairies of north central United States and south central Canada, to spend winters in northern Mexico and the southern tip of the United States near Texas.
- Baird's Sparrows migrate in Fall from September to October and in Spring from April to May.

Overwintering:

- They winter in arid grasslands of the southwestern U.S. and northern Mexico.
- Baird's Sparrows overwinter from December-January.

Threats/Conservation:

- Baird's Sparrows have lost about 65% of their population since 1968 and are on the Yellow WatchList, which is a list of declining species created by the Audubon Society.
- Because they forage for insects and seeds in tallgrass prairie, they are threatened by the loss of native grassland to agriculture.
- The recent focus on declining populations of grassland birds has prompted research on habitat requirements, abundance, distribution, and breeding biology of Baird's Sparrows throughout their breeding range.

Barn Owl • *Tyto alba*



General information

- Adult average weight: 0.95-1.4 lbs (430.91-635.03 g).
- They nest in tree cavities, caves, and in urban buildings.
- Their dish-shaped faces help to locate rodents in the grass at night.

Breeding:

- They can breed in their first year, and older birds may breed every month of the year. Traditional nest sites are often used for many generations.
- The breeding cycle often starts in late winter, and by early spring, pairs are usually spending much of their time at their intended nest place.
- The main nesting season is from March to August.

Migration:

- There are populations all around the world. Most Barn Owls in tropical areas do not migrate, but boreal and austral populations migrate within their winter and summer ranges.

Overwintering:

- Some remain near the northern edges of their range all winter, but some—especially young birds—move longer distances southward in the fall.

Threats/Conservation:

- Barn Owls are declining in parts of their range due to habitat loss.
- Conversion of their natural habitats to agricultural fields, as well as prey poisoned by pesticides are some of their biggest threats.
- Populations may be helped by providing nest boxes, and decrease in use of pesticides.

Bar-tailed Godwit • *Limosa lapponica*



General information

- Adult average weight: 10 oz (283.49 g).
- Bar-tailed Godwits hold the world record for non-stop flight: 11,000km in 8 days. They lose almost half of their body weight along their migratory journey.
- Their habitats include estuarine mudflats, beaches and mangroves where they feed on mollusks, worms and aquatic insects.

Breeding:

- Bar-tailed Godwits breed in Scandinavia, northern Asia, and Alaska.
- Their breeding season is June-July.

Migration:

- They migrate in flocks from Australia and New Zealand to coastal East Asia, Alaska, and northwestern Europe.
- Bar-tailed Godwits migrate in Fall between September and October and in Spring between April and June.

Overwintering:

- Bar-tailed Godwits winter in Australia and New Zealand.
- Their wintering season is from December to February.

Threats/Conservation:

- Bar-tailed Godwits encounter threats from the modification and degradation of their habitats, which affect stopover sites and non-breeding grounds.
- The conservation and restoration of breeding, stopover, and wintering sites helps protect these birds.

Calliope Hummingbird • *Selasphorus calliope*



General information

- Adult average weight: 0.09 oz (2.5 g).
- Calliope Hummingbirds are the smallest birds in North America.
- They prefer high, mountain habitats and have been spotted up to 11,000 feet.
- The males establish feeding territories which they defend against other males.

Breeding:

- Their breeding habitat varies from open shrub habitats to higher altitudes in the United States and Canada.
- Their breeding season is from May to June.

Migration:

- During Fall, they fly south via the Rocky Mountains, stopping in subalpine and mountain meadows.
- They travel around 5,000 miles each year in a big oval from the breeding to wintering grounds.

Overwintering:

- Calliope Hummingbirds winter in the southwestern United States, Mexico, and Central America.
- Their wintering season goes from November to February.

Threats/Conservation:

- Calliope Hummingbirds are threatened by habitat loss and collisions with pane-glass windows.
- Planting native plants to provide food and shelter and keeping feeders clean to reduce the spread of disease help protect these birds.
- By making your windows bird-friendly, you can help reduce bird collisions.

Canada Warbler • *Cardellina canadensis*



General information

- Adult average weight: 0.42 oz (12 g)
- The Canada Warbler is listed as an endangered species under the Threatened Species Act of Canada.
- These birds display sexual dimorphism, where males are more brightly colored than females and juveniles.

Breeding:

- Their breeding range includes the boreal forests of Canada and the US.
- Their breeding season is from June to July.

Migration:

- The Canada Warbler's migration path is generally south and west to the Texas coast, then along the Gulf Coast to southern Mexico or cross over to the Pacific.
- They migrate late in spring and early in fall; peak passage in many areas during May and August.

Overwintering:

- They overwinter in Costa Rica, Panama, and the South American Andes.
- Canada Warblers overwinter from November to February

Threats/Conservation:

- Andean forests, an important part of the Canada Warbler's migration route, are among the most threatened forest in the world, and have experienced a 90% loss due to agricultural expansion (cattle, coffee, coca) and production of fuel wood.
- Additional threats include habitat fragmentation from energy development and habitat desiccation from land draining and climate change.
- Conservation actions include supporting sustainable farming and bird-friendly coffee and also habitat conservation and restoration.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher • *Tyrannus savana*



General information

- Adult average weight: 0.98-1.12 oz (28-32 g)
- The males have long tails, shaped like scissors.
- Fork-tailed Flycatchers are very gregarious and may roost in flocks of up to 10,000 individuals.
- They fly in groups and tend to all perch on the same tree.

Breeding:

- Their breeding range goes from central Mexico to Argentina, but the southernmost populations migrate north of the Equator during the southern winter.
- Nesting densities of Fork-tailed Flycatchers are higher in cerrado habitat (savannas and grasslands amid humid and dry forests) that has been altered by human activities than in pristine cerrado, possibly because the species prefers to nest in more open landscapes.
- The breeding season occurs between December and February.

Migration:

- The southernmost populations are migratory, while populations in southern Mexico are resident.
- The Fork-tailed Flycatchers' migration includes routes between the Andes, and the Amazon where they search for grasslands, pastures, riparian forests, and open areas with scattered trees.

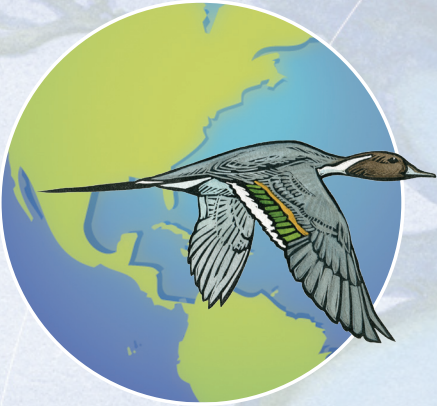
Overwintering:

- Fork-tailed Flycatchers winter in Amazonia, northern South America, the Orinoco River Basin, Trinidad and Tobago, and occasionally in the West Indies.
- They occupy their winter range from June to August.

Threats/Conservation:

- Fork-tailed Flycatchers are primarily insectivores, so use of pesticides is one their biggest threats, along with habitat loss.
- Conservation actions include pesticide control, natural fences in farmlands, and grassland habitat restoration.

Northern Pintail • *Anas acuta*



General information

- Adult average weight: 1-3 lbs (453.59 g - 1.36 kg).
- Northern Pintails dabble on the surface of the water and filter out seeds and insects with their bills.
- They spend the nonbreeding season in wetlands, ponds, lakes, bays, tidal marshes, and flooded agricultural fields.

Breeding:

- Northern Pintails nest in seasonal wetlands, croplands, grasslands, wet meadows, and shortgrass prairies.
- They breed across northern Eurasia, as well as in Canada, Alaska, and the Midwestern United States.
- Their breeding season is from June to July.

Migration:

- They fly in a direct route from Alaska to California across the Pacific Ocean, as well as south along the coast and via interior pathways, ultimately arriving to California, Mexico, and the Gulf Coast.

Overwintering:

- The Northern Pintail is one of the first ducks to migrate south to wintering grounds in the southern half of the United States, Mexico, and Central America.
- They overwinter from November to February.

Threats/Conservation:

- Threats include nests destroyed by the use of tools like plows and harrows for farming, hunting with lead pellets, and habitat loss.
- Conservation actions include wetland conservation and restoration, reduced use of plastics, and hunting regulations.

Purple Martin • *Progne subis*



General information

- Adult average weight: 0.35-1.9 oz (9.92-53.86 g).
- Purple Martins are the largest North American swallow.
- They nest in existing cavities that are either natural or artificial.
- Purple Martins not only get all their food in flight, they also get all their water that way. They skim the surface of ponds and scoop up the water with their lower bill.

Breeding:

- They breed in open areas across eastern North America and in some locations on the west coast from British Columbia to Mexico.
- Purple Martins breed from May to June

Migration:

- Their migratory routes include breeding grounds in Michigan, USA, stopovers in the Bahamas, and overwintering sites in Mato Grosso, Brazil.

Overwintering:

- They winter in the Amazon basin, as far south as Mato Grosso, Brazil.
- Their wintering season extends from November to February.

Threats/Conservation:

- Pesticides are a serious threat to Purple Martins and other aerial insectivores, both in their breeding grounds and their wintering grounds in South America.
- Freshwater contamination and urban development are also a threat.
- Conservation actions include limiting pesticide use and maintaining man-made nests or natural cavities.

Western Sandpiper • *Calidris mauri*



General information

- Adult average weight: 0.35-1.9 oz (9.92-53.86 g).
- They are fairly common in tidal areas where they join other shorebirds in foraging on mudflats exposed at low and middle tides.
- Western Sandpipers forage by walking slowly and pecking or probing to obtain tiny invertebrate prey.
- They can feed on biofilm—called biofilm grazing—like a cow grazes in pasturelands.

Breeding:

- They breed on tundra slopes, choosing dry sites with low shrubs found from San Francisco Bay to the Copper River Delta in Alaska.
- Western Sandpipers breed from May to August.

Migration:

- They generally migrate along the Pacific Coast, but many reach the Atlantic Coast in Fall and remain there through the winter.
- They gather in huge, spectacular flocks, particularly along the Pacific coast at San Francisco Bay and in the Copper River Delta in Alaska.

Overwintering:

- They winter along the Pacific coast and the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.
- Western Sandpipers overwinter from November to February.

Threats/Conservation:

- Western Sandpipers are threatened by tundra fragmentation, coastal urban development, loss of habitat, and wetland acidification.
- The effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, reduce available foraging habitats and prey.
- Conservation actions include reduced use of plastic, wetland restoration, and climate change action.

Yellow-breasted Chat • *Icteria virens*



General information

- Adult average weight: 0.92 oz (26.08 g).
- Yellow-breasted Chats make up their own family, called the Icteriidae.
- They live in thickets and other dense, regrowing areas such as bramble bushes, clearcuts, powerline corridors, and shrubs along streams.
- In spring, males may sing from an exposed perch, but otherwise these birds typically stay well hidden.

Breeding:

- They breed from the southern plains of Canada to central Mexico.
- The Yellow-breasted Chats' breeding season extends from June to July.

Migration:

- Some Yellow-breasted Chats migrate over land, while others fly across the Gulf of Mexico or along the San Pedro River in Arizona.

Overwintering:

- They winter in southern Mexico, Central America, including Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama, and, and the Caribbean.
- Yellow-breasted Chats overwinter from December to February.

Threats/Conservation:

- Migrating Chats can collide with tall buildings and radio towers or become disoriented by bright lights.
- Conservation actions include clean ups of riparian areas, turning off your lights at night, and bird-friendly window interventions to avoid collisions.