

February 2018,

Flathead Audubon signed on to a letter to Congress made available by the American Bird Conservancy.

Dear [Administration and Congress],

As a bird enthusiast, we urge you to support the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which protects migratory birds in a number of critical ways, and to oppose a harmful policy change by the Department of the Interior, and in the Energy Bill (H.R. 4239) that would undermine this essential wildlife conservation law. Migratory birds play a key role in the U.S. economy, providing recreational opportunities that create jobs and generate billions of dollars in revenue.

Birds are also good indicators of environmental health and provide environmental benefits, including pollination, insect and rodent control, and seed dispersal. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects 1,026 migratory species. It regulates the hunting of waterfowl, and it encourages bird conservation in management plans and development projects — but more needs to be done.

Currently, one-third of all migratory bird species are in decline or facing severe threats from habitat loss, predators, pesticides, and collisions. To address this threat, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed the creation of an incidental take permitting system to reduce loss of birds by applying best management practices and mitigating for unavoidable losses. For example, the agency has been requiring oil and gas companies to cover open oil pits to prevent birds from falling in and drowning in oil.

Now, the Department of the Interior and Congress are proposing to make it impossible to protect migratory from avoidable sources of mortality like oil pits. We urge you to stand up for migratory birds and protect them from this environmental rollback by supporting a strong Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Thank you for helping defend migratory birds across our country.

Sincerely,

*Kay Mitchell, President
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