



LANE COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

AN OREGON CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 5086 • EUGENE, OREGON 97405

www.laneaudubon.org

Dear Legislators,

I am writing on behalf of the board and members of the Lane County Audubon Society. Our organization is dedicated to the conservation of the natural environment with a primary focus on birds, and other wildlife and their habitats. We urge Oregon to join Hawaii in passing a statewide ban on chlorpyrifos and restricting the use of neonicotinoids.

One of the most-used and most-lethal insecticides in the United States, chlorpyrifos, has serious neurotoxic and endocrine effects (troubling for the health of people as well as wildlife.) The use of this toxin has both direct and indirect harmful effects on birds. It is applied on several common crops: our fruits, vegetables, beans, and grains. Of particular danger to birds are the highly concentrated doses of chlorpyrifos found in seed treatments. These treated seeds can be deadly to the birds that eat them, particularly to passerines such as pipits and sparrows. The granular applications of chlorpyrifos (dried pellets applied to fields, croplands, golf-course turf, ornamental plants, areas around utilities, etc.) are ingested by many types of birds as grit. Water sources are another direct avenue for ingestion due to the persistence of chlorpyrifos in water. In birds, incidences of poisoning, weight loss, reduction in numbers of eggs laid, and alteration of birds' migratory orientation have been reported.

In addition to the direct toxic effects on bird populations, chlorpyrifos can also decimate the food base for birds. Because it is one of the most toxic pesticides in aquatic ecosystems, it poisons fish, a regular food source for many species of birds. Several recent reports have noted the dramatic decline of insect populations which, in turn, adversely affects birds that rely on insects as their food source. Even birds that are not typically considered insectivorous, such as hummingbirds, rely on insects as a food source for their young.

Neonicotinoids have similarly been found to have both direct and indirect adverse effects on birds.

Recent reports indicate that 30% of bird species in the United States and 40% of populations globally are suffering population decline. Many of the worst losses include grassland species which are overrepresented in agricultural areas where pesticide use is more prevalent. The Environmental Protection Agency's own analysis found that chlorpyrifos is likely to adversely affect about 97% of threatened and endangered animals including over 100 species of listed birds.

In addition to a love of birds, our members are particularly concerned about pollinators. Bees are considered to be at especially elevated risk of harm from these pesticides. We rely on pollinators for our food and for healthy ecosystems that support fish, birds, wildlife, and people.

Currently, the use of these poisons remains legal and, unfortunately, widespread in our country. We must act at the state level to protect our citizens and the valuable wildlife found in Oregon. Please support SB 853.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you want more information on the documented adverse effects of these pesticides.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. We appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,
Debbie Schlenoff, Ph.D.
Conservation Chair
Lane County Audubon Society