



EAST CASCADES BIRD ALLIANCE

Dear Senator Nathanson

East Cascades Bird Alliance (ECBA) is the leading bird conservation organization for Central Oregonians and beyond, and we are writing to you now to seek your support for House Bill 4134. We represent over 350 members and over 500 subscribers to our newsletters.

Senator, the sounds of nature are becoming silent. Bird populations are declining at an alarming rate. More than 3 billion birds have been lost in North America since 1970, according to the [State of the Birds 2025](#) report, published by a coalition of national and international government agencies and conservation groups including National Audubon Society, American Bird Conservancy, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and others. The coalition states that private lands conservation programs, and voluntary conservation partnerships for working lands, are necessary to stop the declines and start recoveries.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified around 300 at-risk species with small or declining populations. There are **about 60 to 100 birds that spend all or part of their lives in Central Oregon and over 40 of them are presently considered at-risk**. Losing this many species indicates we are losing functional ecosystems, and that holds serious implications for humans as well.

Did you know that people travel from other states to Oregon just to see many of the bird species that are now in decline? For example, our own “Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival (recently rebranded to Dean Hale Woodpecker Weekend)” is one example of how these birds are important both socially and economically in Central Oregon. Every spring, hundreds of people spend time and money in our area because we have more woodpecker diversity than most of the country. These birders stay in lodging and eat in restaurants in our area because they want to see these splendid creatures. Please know that several of these woodpecker species are identified by ODFW as species at risk.

For many years, ODFW has had a plan to recover these species (<https://oregonconservationstrategy.org/>), however ODFW does not have the dedicated funding to implement this plan. If this bill does not pass, we can anticipate further declines in populations of species at risk, further degradation and loss of valuable ecosystems, and species getting listed as endangered or threatened at the State and Federal levels which often initiates new responsibilities for private and public landowners.

We see this bill as a critical opportunity to both recover habitat and diminish the number of declining birds in Central Oregon and all biodiversity across Oregon. Specifically, HB 4134 would result in more successful protection and restoration of bird habitats and more wildlife rehabilitation of injured birds. A related benefit would be the hiring of natural resource professionals; a field that the OSU-Cascades campus prepares students for, and at a time when federal employees have been “DOGE-ed”. Imagine how proud we could feel to know that passing this bill also helped worthy natural resource professionals get employment.

Thank you,

Laurel Collins, ECBA Chair Conservation and Science Committee, Board Member
on behalf of East Cascades Bird Alliance